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STRIPPED DOWN

SHRED BULL!



PRO NATIONALS
PREVIEW



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COVER: Shaun Simpson – out front and on the gas
© *Sutty*

CONTENTS: 12-time world trials champion Dougie Lampkin takes FMX to a whole new level at FatCat Motoparc
© *Sutty*



COMMENT

It's a bit of a shocking confession to make but apart from a day shivering my cojones off and dragging DBR's pet Oirishman over muddy rocks at The Tough One, up until last weekend I hadn't been to an event since the MXdN at Donington in September. I know, I know, hang my head in shame! Anyway, this has now been rectified with my annual pilgrimage to the Hawkstone Park International Motocross and what a bloody nice way to break my duck and get back on the scoresheet.

A little bit of sun can make a big, big difference and the weather at Hawkstone was unseasonably good. But that was just the cherry on top of a cracking day's racing. The MX2 class was all about the Red Bull KTM pairing of Shaun Simpson and Rui Goncalves while up in MX1 it was Martin Honda team-mates Marc De Reuver and Kevin Stribos who set the pace. In the great scheme of things pre-season internationals are a little like winning practice – with no titles up for grabs they are in a certain sense pointless. Literally. But what they do show is who's been working hard in the off-season and it was good to see that some British riders have clearly been getting their heads down over the winter months.

What wasn't so good to see was Bryan MacKenzie and Gordon Crockard laid out after a huge coming together in the opening MX1 moto. The first turn at Hawkstone isn't even really a turn – more like a flat-out right kink – and when Bry and Gordy went down they must have been hooking fourth or fifth gear. A sport as potentially dangerous as MX is a fickle mistress. Bry's broken some bones in his hand but for GC it's much worse and a winter's hard training was rendered redundant in the five seconds it took from the gate dropping to him hitting the deck. Get well soon Gordy – and that's not just from all of us at DBR, it's from everyone involved in the sport.

With Hawkstone done and dusted for another year it's been a typically busy deadline week in the DBR dungeon – too much coffee, too little beer, too many late nights, too little sleep – but the fact I'm writing this now means there's light at the end of the tunnel. And in this case it's the Dartford Tunnel as in the next couple of days we'll be saddling up the battered DBR Tranny and pointing her south towards Canada Heights and the first round of the Maxxis British championship. Always one of the best events on the UK calendar thanks to the hard work of the Sidcup club, an awesome track and the large village of London on its doorstep providing lots of potential spectators, Canada Heights is guaranteed to start the domestic series with a bang. And as far as the ACU are concerned it's going to have to be as there's some serious competition this year in the form of the MC Federation's Red Bull Pro Nationals series.

You'll find a preview for this new series starting on page 42 of this month's issue but just to whet your appetite before you reach the article, it's safe to say that this could set the benchmark for MX in the UK. The baby of promoter Matt Bates and DEP boss Craig Elwell, the six-round series promises to shake up the way the sport in this country operates with super-slick organisation, an exciting format and the kudos that only comes with having Red Bull as the title sponsor. Factor in the fact that three of the rounds will incorporate races in the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup series and all the benefits for the schoolies that brings and you've got a winning recipe. It might not be quite as potent as my recipe for Spanish spicy bean casserole that's been bringing joy to Sully and designer Large Marge for the past few weeks (see page 68) but it'll certainly come close...

Sean



You'd be smiling if you had a Buildbase baseball cap...

NEWSHAWND!

DEPUTY DAWG'S DIRTY DELIVERY OF OFF-ROAD NEWS, RUMOUR AND GOSSIP...

The big rumour this month is that Tommy Searle's all set to throw a spanner in the works of the MX2 world championships by coming back from America to use the first three rounds of the FIM series in Italy, Bulgaria and Turkey to warm up for the AMA Nationals that don't start until May. Already looking super-sharp in pre-season testing, it's said that the teenage star will pit out of the factory awning alongside Shaun Simpson and Rui Goncalves – let's hope he doesn't ruffle too many feathers during his stay if he does come home to roost.

But, like always, separating the truth from the fiction is proving to be difficult and after speaking with KTM's Pit Beirer things ain't much clearer! "We don't have a starting place at the moment because the 40 MX2 riders for the opening GP have already been chosen," says Pit. "At the moment it's all just a rumour and there is no official statement from KTM."

If Tommy does somehow backdoor an entry then the scene for his first GP of the year will of course be Faenza where he won the final race of 2008 while team-mate Tyla Ratray took the world crown. The hillside Italian circuit hosts the season opener of the revamped world championship that will see Saturday quali dropped in favour of gate-pick races for the first time in its illustrious history on March 28/29 and there should be an intriguing and exciting battle for glory in both classes. For those of you not fortunate enough to be travelling to Italy for the opening GP of '09 then you can see all the action live and free on www.freecaster.tv

Somebody who may well be watching the opening GP in webcast format from the comfort of his own bed is PAR Honda's Gordon Crockard who picked up a plethora of life-threatening injuries in a start straight accident at the recent Hawkstone Park pre-season international.

Gordy – who apparently wanted an excuse not to write his column this month – was very lucky to escape in an ambulance with just a few broken ribs, one bust collarbone, several fractured vertebra, some severe bruising and a burst spleen after tangling with several of his competitors midway up

the ridiculously fast Hawkstone start straight and getting ploughed by several more. It's reported that the Crock Star lost around eight pints of blood in the accident leaving the red-haired Ulsterman looking even paler than normal! Get well soon Gordy you dastardly column dodger!

Crockard's injuries meant that he missed the opening round of the Maxxis British championship series that kicked off at Canada Heights some time between this issue of DBR being sent to the printers and it landing in the shops. For a full, frank and in-depth report and pictures from that race you can log on to www.dirtbikerider.com where we'll blow your brains out with a Brit MX blogathon that'll beat all others! You'll also find plenty of other great free dirt biking stuff there like wallpapers, galleries, videos and competitions too – all at the credit-crunch crunching cost of feck all!

In all honesty it actually seems like the credit crunch might not have been taken hold in the North West just yet as two of the region's biggest motocross teams – CCM Racing and STR Honda – have quite commendably picked up new backers from outside the sport.

It's the UK's fastest growing builders merchants Buildbase who will be backing CCM's bid to regain GP glory as new title sponsors of the Bolton-based team. Currently with around 150 branches situated right around the country from Aberdeen to Yeovil and beyond, business seems to be booming for Buildbase which is good news for CCM as Technical Director Austin Clews explains.

"This is a massive boost to the team and confirms that we've been moving in the right direction since we began racing again 12 months ago. Having Buildbase on board has brought additional credibility to the team and will allow us the resources we need if we are going to successfully compete against the factory and more established teams in the paddock."

It could also be good news for this here Dawg who's been picked up as a factory rider for the CCM team AND is currently undertaking extensive house renovations. So if anyone from Buildbase top brass is reading this...



WHERE'SZACH?

FIND ZACH OSBORNE AND WIN A PAIR OF TCX PRO 2 BOOTS

Look at this head shot of Zach Osborne. Go on, LOOK AT IT! Somewhere within the pages of this magazine we've superimposed the UTAG Yamaha rider's napper onto another picture – and if you can find it you could win yourself a pair of top-of-the-range TCX Pro 2 MX boots courtesy of our pals at Nevis Marketing.

Once you've worked out where's Zach you need to text the word **DBRZACH** followed by a space, the page number, another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.*

Entries close on **April 16** with the first correct answer chosen at random getting the boots (don't worry, we'll give the winner a bell to get their size)...

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GOLDENPAD

WIN A PAIR OF RENTHAL HANDLEBARS

There are many different sorts of bars – poncey wine bars, more traditional beer-drinking bars, exotic cocktail bars, underground bagpiping bars, why there's even such a thing as a fubar! Like 'em or loathe 'em (and some are good while some are very bad), bars are part of everyday life. And if you race dirt bikes then there's also Renthal bars!

We've teamed up with Renthal to each month offer one lucky reader a pair of bars and to be in with a shout of winning couldn't be easier!

Have a close look at our pic of this golden Renthal bar pad, then flick through this month's mag and find the full pic we've taken it from. Once you've found it simply text the word **DBRRENT** followed by a space, the page number it appears on, another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.*

Entries close on **April 16** with the first correct entry chosen at random getting a pair of Renthal handlebars of their choice...



Get well soon GC



Tarah Geiger – slower but far prettier than DK



Scuba Steve – licking the Yanks into shape!

In other CCM-related news the British bike builders have recently signed sassy 16-year-old Alix Dunlop. Alix will be doing the full season of women's world championship events and after finishing second at the opening round of the Dirt Bike Bitch-sponsored British ladies' series behind MVR-D's Natalie Kane looks to be right on the pace.

Meanwhile, just up the road from CCM at STR Honda's Lancashire base, it's Hawkstone International programme sponsors Proppa.com who are getting behind Steve Turner's fledgling team – Proppa are better known as the UK's leading online provider of car, van and pick-up accessories. Already heavily involved in all kinds of motorsports including motocross, supermoto, enduro and speedway, the rapidly expanding company recently added the rapidly improving STR Honda squad to its sponsorship portfolio.

"The whole team is excited to have Proppa.com on board," says Steve. "This addition represents a logical step in the team's progression and certainly helps raise both our profiles. We're completely committed to delivering tangible benefits to all our sponsors and shall continue to raise the bar in

terms of presentation and more importantly results."

In other sponsorship news Philip Coulter of No Fear has been badgering us to mention that he's recently signed two up-and-coming riders to wear No Fear products in 2009. Philip's brand-new ambassadors are Kawasaki UK's Kristian Whatley – who only recently parted company with CCM – and MotoShack KTM rider Christian 'Turbo' Taylor.

In AMA supercross news it's honours even after nine rounds as Chad Reed and James Stewart sit atop the championship with 199 points apiece after the 'Chunder from Down Under' finally won one in Indianapolis. But the big, big news in America surrounds former 85cc world champion Steven Clarke – aka Scuba Steve – who is currently an outstanding seventh overall in the Lites East standings after finishing a fine fifth in the Indy Main Event. French comeback kid Christophe Pourcel still leads the Lites East series after three rounds and looks set to take his first AMA crown to put on the mantelpiece next to the MX2 world championship he won in 2006.

Trials news now and the BTC kicked off at Low North Park over on t'east coast near Scarborough

and – shock horror – for the first time since 1873 Dougie Lampkin failed to win a British championship trial that he'd entered. After a bad (by his standards) first lap Dougie pulled it back but a five on the last section of the day handed the win to Gas Gas rider James Dabill with Michael Brown taking third.

And finally congratulations to wild Welshman Jason 'Ratboy' Thomas who finished a fantastic second place in the opening round of the Can-Am GNCC Racing series in the XC2 Pro Lites division at River Ranch in Florida. A special mention must also go out to Midlander Rudy Austin who finished a fighting third place in the Vet B (30+) class.

The GNCC series' Main Event was won quite convincingly by Suzuki star Charlie 'in the trees' Mullins – who led from start to finish – ahead of Paul 'Dwayne' Whibley, Nathan Kanney and former motocross star Mike Brown. Despite not racing himself, David Knight still kinda claimed victory on the day as he helped his new lady friend Tarah Geiger take the win (by throwing rocks and dust at her as she passed – apparently it's some kind of Manx mating ritual!) in the women's division.

Good work DK!





JEREMY LUSK AKA PITBULL

26/11/84 – 9/2/09

When news filtered through from the internet that 24-year-old X-Games gold medallist Jeremy Lusk had been badly injured during a freestyle competition run in Costa Rica it didn't come as much of a surprise as the risks that modern FMX riders take in order to win a comp – or simply win the adoration of a packed out arena – are immense. But when the Metal Mulisha rider lost his battle to live soon after being placed in a medically induced coma by healthcare professionals the entire off-road world was rocked to its core.

Always a keen competitor, Lusk pushed the boundaries of the sport and soon became known as the world leader in backflip grab tricks such as the backflip double Hart attack which he could throw out perfectly at the drop of a hat. Using that trick Lusk easily picked up a silver medal in the 2008 X-Games Best Trick contest before unleashing an arsenal of other badass manoeuvres to go one better in the FMX competition in order to take his first X-Games gold medal – a feat which he'd repeat in the Best Trick contest at X-Games Mexico later in the summer. While 2008 was great for Jeremy, 2009 should have been even better and the year in which he truly dominated the sport he loved.

To honour Jeremy Lusk's life and help support his wife Lauren, a trust fund has been set up that donations can be made to through the lusklegacyfoundation.com website. It's also possible to purchase the rather spectacular looking 'In God's Hands' tee from the web stores at metalmulisha.com and freestylextreme.com with all proceeds going to the same worthy cause.

It's difficult for us to truly put into words what Jeremy meant to so many people so here's a message from his friends and comrades in the Metal Mulisha. "Jeremy was never one to back down from any challenge life had to offer him on or off the track. As a fierce competitor he rode to the top of the freestyle world embracing the risks of the sport with hardcore passion. As a Christian, Jeremy had faith that no matter what he would always be on the ride of his life. To Jeremy there was never a question of there being any consequences, especially doing something he loved. His drive, love, passion and commitment drove him to become the 'baddest ass' rider of his time. He and his wife Lauren will always be part of the Mulisha family and his memory will continue to push our group of friends to the outer limits of life."



JEREMY LUSK





MMX IS GO!

CHURCH, NICHOLLS AND KANE TAKE FIRST BLOOD IN DEVON...

Photos by JP O'Connell

Although the MMX series is considered to be something of a B-grade championship these days, when the first round falls the week before Britain's only pre-season international and on a dead weekend in the UK calendar there's absolutely nowt that can stop the very best in British MX beef from battling it out bar-to-bar purely for pride and a handful of prize money.

Encompassing the British Open, Ladies' and U21 series, the first round of the MMX championship goes off in Devon at Little Silver Moto Parc that's just a stone's throw from Exeter. The wide-open circuit is in prime condition for some sweet racing and when the startgates drop the crowd aren't disappointed.

It's CCM Racing's Tom Church who takes the overall win in the British Open class but without taking a moto win. TC's consistent 3-2 beats Stephen Sword's 2-3 on the better second moto tie-breaker rule while MVR-D Suzuki's Carl Nunn takes third with a 1-5 scorecard. It's PAR Honda's Brad Anderson who wins the second moto after DNFin the first to take a disappointing seventh overall. After removing the wildcards it's Nunny who

leads the series by seven points ahead of Lewis Gregory, Kristian Whatley and Ando.

In the U21s the only ringers of note are KTM UK's Jake Nicholls who easily takes a double moto win and the overall as well and MVR-D Suzuki's Matiss Karro who runs DNF-2 for eighth overall.

PAR Honda's Scott Elderfield runs 2-3 to finish in second spot on the podium while Nicholls' team-mate Graeme Irwin steers the KTM UK SX-F250 home to third overall with a 3-4. Heading into round two it's this pair who'll carry a small points advantage over the on-form Shane Carless who had an excellent first moto at the Hawkstone International just one week later.

In the Dirt Bike Bitch Ladies' class it's MVR-D Suzuki's Natalie Kane who comes up smelling of roses, easily taking both moto wins. In fact Natalie's so dominant that she takes the first moto by a margin of 1 minute 42 and laps up to seventh while second time out she wins by even more and laps to sixth place! Look out for Natalie in the GPs where she should do some serious damage. CCM Racing's Alix Dunlop finishes second with her 5-2 scorecard while Kerry Wilson runs 3-4 for third.

Sugar Kane! Natalie starts the series with a super-sweet double win at Little Silver in Devon



"Yellow hats are cool - they said so on Trinny and Susannah!"

WIN!WIN!WIN!

RIP N ROLL RACER PACKS UP FOR GRABS

Picture the scene. It's the closing stages of the race, you're on the leader's rear wheel and lining him up for a killer pass – then, gosh darn it, the blighter roosts you so badly you can't see a thing and you career off the track and collide with Greasy Vera's burger van. Instead of kissing the trophy girl the lovely Vera – all 18 stones of her – is kissing you. Only it's a Glasgow kiss!

Okay, now let's rewind to the bit where you've just been roosted. This time instead of careering off the track you simply give your Rip N Roll roll-offs a tug, regain crystal-clear vision and take the lead with a pass so smooth even Greasy Vera swoons over her slightly under-cooked jumbo sausages, sending the novelty tomato-shaped ketchup dispenser flying. Pretty sweet scenario, eh?

Well this is one scenario that could become reality because we've teamed up with Rip N Roll to offer 10 lucky readers a Racer Pack – that's a pair of Hybrid goggles fitted with the Total Vision System (roll-offs) plus a nose guard and a bag – all of their very own.

To be in with a chance of winning a Rip N Roll Racer Pack all we want to know is which DB Racing rider represented Siff Affrika, sorry, South Africa at the 2008 MX des Nations.

- Was it**
- A) Michael Phillips
 - B) Phillip Michaels
 - C) Neville Bradshaw
 - D) Damon Bradshaw

Think you know the answer? Okay, power-up your PC (or Apple Mac if you're rich) and go straight to www.dirtbikerider.com where you need to follow the competition link, pop in your answer, fill out the fields and hit transmit. Entries close on **April 16** with the first 10 correct entries chosen totally at random getting a Rip N Roll Racer Pack each...



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STEPHEN SWORD

SILVER SURFER!

SWORDY SKIMS TO SECOND AGAINST THE 450s IN THE MMX BUT THEN A THROAT INFECTION PUTS HIM OUT OF HAWKSTONE...

Words by **Stephen Sword** Photo by **JP O'Connell**

This month has been busy but, hey, nothing new there! I went over to Holland to do some riding and testing for a few days, just getting the bike dialled in to my liking and stuff like that. I'm really happy with it – it took me some time to gel with the bike but now I feel comfortable and confident on it.

I actually popped backwards and forwards for a couple of weeks to Holland until I felt good. Reason for going out there is that's where the team is based in case you were wondering. I then decided to make the MMX race at Little Silver my first outing. It was a pretty good day and I enjoyed the track a lot – the big deep ruts were awesome and it was perfect conditions. Most riders were on 450s but I just stuck to the 250. Apart from the start and the hills I wasn't at too much of a disadvantage. It felt great being hit with all that roost again! I was eating a lot of roost as my starts were bad but battled through enjoying every lap and every mouthful of roost that came off the 450s at 100mph. I ended up second overall which was cool but most of all I was just happy to be back out racing and preparing for the year ahead.

I feel hungrier than ever to win this year and excited about both the British and world championships. The team is running good and I'm really happy with the way they are pushing hard to win as well. My mechanic Wayno is doing a sweet job although he's been working around the clock lately. He just pops a couple of Red Bulls and keeps on truckin'. My team-mates are a complete waste of time! Ha – only joking! They are all good guys too. I went back up to Jake Nicholls' last week – man, his track is so nice. Every time I go there I never want to stop riding because I'm enjoying myself so much.

It's a bit of a drive for me to get there, probably just as well as I would be hounding him to ride every day.

After Little Silver I practised on the Wednesday leading up to Hawkstone but was feeling pretty sick. That night I had a fever and a really sore throat so I went to the doc the next day. I had a bad throat infection so he gave me some antibiotics and told me to rest. I left it until Saturday morning to make a decision on whether I would ride or not but I didn't feel much better so decided to give it a miss. I was so looking forward to it and was gutted not to be going but I was already thinking ahead to Canada Heights the following week.

By Wednesday I was back feeling 100 per cent but just to be on the safe side I lay out on the couch and watched a few rounds of the AMA I recorded on Sky. It wasn't as good as being able to race at Hawkstone but Bubba was good to watch. It is good to see that Christophe Pourcel is back fit and doing well. And then I watched the Carling Cup final with Man United against Tottenham. A pretty boring game but the penalties were good to watch plus Man United won.

In my spare time I've been doing the finishing touches to the nursery. The little man will be here soon so I want to make sure everything is squared away before his arrival. That's about all that's been going on really. Just looking forward to the British kicking off and then the first world round in Italy. I'm pumped up for it and excited. I look forward to updating you next month on the results and maybe some news on the baby's arrival.

Until then enjoy the racing and take care...

Stephen Sword
#7



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T H E MARSHALS

BRAVING THE WEATHER, BRAVING THE RIDERS AND EVEN BRAVING THE CROWD – FOR THE HARD-WORKING MARSHALS IT'S A LABOUR OF LOVE...

Words and photo by JP O'Connell

One of the most important and probably under appreciated jobs at any race meeting is that of track marshal. Without our flag-toting friends out on the circuit there would be no racing so we caught up with a couple of the marshals out on the track at Little Silver at the first round of the British MMX championships.

DBR: Introduce yourselves to us...

DH: "Hi, I'm Dave Hives, now retired (left)."

BW: "I'm Barry Ward and I work in catering (right)."

DBR: How many events do you marshal at in a season?

DH: "Once you take holidays out I probably go to about 20 events a season."

BW: "Near enough every single weekend between March and October! It's probably 40 all in."

DBR: Are you affiliated to any clubs?

DH: "I used to be with the South Midlands Marshals but it ended up sort of dying a death! Other than that I am a member of the Sidecar Motocross Association."

BW: "I started off in the Eastern Centre Marshal Club back in 2003 and for the last two years I have also been a member of the ACU Marshal Club."

DBR: Do you travel far or try to keep it local?

DH: "Wherever the meetings are! The average for us is probably 120 miles each way. I live just north of Bath."

BW: "I live in Colchester so to get here today was 400 miles as I had to go via Cambridge. The furthest I've been was 500 miles each way."

DBR: Do you get paid for doing this?

DH: "This is totally voluntary. Some of the clubs will give a contribution towards our expenses which is always gratefully received! We do it for the love – definitely not for the money!"

BW: "It's nice if you are looked after by the promoters – if they provide some nice hot food, whether there are any goodies on offer, it all helps."

DBR: Would you say it's an easy job?

DH: "It looks easy but you have to be so attentive all of the time. Even us experienced ones can miss things sometimes – you've got to be on your toes all of the time, it really isn't as easy as it looks."

BW: "One of the aspects I don't enjoy or find easy is when we are expected to provide crowd control, trying to keep them behind the barriers or off the track because there isn't any security in place. The abuse certainly isn't appreciated."

DBR: Have you ever been hit by a bike?

DH: "I have been taken out by one – only because he went through the ropes and took me down with them!"

BW: "I've been clipped at a supercross but not actually hit."

DBR: Do you have a motocross background yourselves?

DH: "I've been around it since I was a kid – when I was a youngster I couldn't afford to race and by the time I could afford it I wasn't fit enough! I've been marshalling now since I was a teenager."

BW: "I have got a motocross bike – a 1990 KX250. I've got a s**t job! I first marshalled in '03 at Canada Heights and that was it for me, I loved it."

DBR: What's been the biggest crash that you've witnessed?

DH: "It was at Canada Heights when a bike went right over the top of me. I thought 'there should be a rider with that', I looked back and he was laid out in the narrowest part of the track. It was chaos."

I would be able to go to a GP and be six deep at the fence. You have a job to do but I still get to enjoy the races."

DBR: Do you try and remain impartial?

DH: "You've always got your favourites, it's nice to see them along."

BW: "If they do a sighting lap then I will clap on the riders that I like, during the race then maybe some words of encouragement but no hand signals!"

DBR: Which has been the best day's racing that you have marshalled at?

DH: "Perhaps Noycey winning at Farleigh Castle back in hmmm, yeah, back in the day!"

BW: "I'd say it was the des Nations at Matterley Basin, followed by the Nations at Donington."



BW: "It was in the support race at Foxhill last year, unfortunately I think the rider was paralysed."

DBR: What is the most difficult aspect of marshalling?

DH: "Concentration, you've just got to concentrate all of the time."

BW: "Trying to keep the public off the track, it can be a real nightmare."

DBR: Have you ever been distracted and missed something?

DH: "Yes, it does happen – we have to admit it! We'd be foolish if we said we saw everything."

BW: "This is where the crowd will help – if we miss it the crowd will be shouting to us instantly."

DBR: Are you actually able to follow and enjoy the racing?

DH: "Yes, I still get to follow what is happening."

BW: "After doing this for so long I don't know that

DBR: Have you ever received any abuse from either the fans or riders? You can't always be popular...

DH: "I had some abuse from a rider I blue-flagged once – he advised me to go and make love somewhere else!"

BW: "Riders occasionally if I put the flag out for them, otherwise it's generally from the crowd! Parents at youth meetings can be a real handful as well."

DBR: What makes you keep coming back for more?

DH: "You're involved and part of it. I have the utmost respect for the riders and I think they respect what we do. We trust each other – I've had Dave Thorpe knock a flag out of my hand before he was that close but he shouted to give me time to step back."

BW: "I'd rather do this than spectate. I wouldn't find it as interesting spectating and until I can ride myself this is as close as I can get."



"Getting the Holeshoot is 50% of any race!"

"If you don't get away with the top three of five, you have lost 15 seconds or so by the end of the first lap, not to mention getting filled in with roost and having to pass a lot of other crazy fast riders". *Shaun Simpson*

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BURNT STEAKS, BROKEN BONES AND DESERT ISLAND DARLINGS – IT MUST BE TIME TO TURN ON OUR MONTHLY MACHISMO METER...

Words by JP O'Connell

For this month's instalment of fun and frolics we packed up some jam sandwiches and a banana before heading down to the Little Silver circuit in Devon where we caught up with the CCM duo of Tom Church and Jason Dougan.

DBR: Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

TC: "I think it would have to be Tom Cruise – for no other reason than he has the same initials as me!"

JD: "Jim Carey."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?

TC: "Back in '98/'99 me and Swordy used to have to clean all of the filters, there used to be a pile of about 100 of them."

JD: "Ummmm, I don't think I ever have!"

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?

TC: "I could have a look and check they are there – actually that's debatable!"

JD: "No, definitely not."

DBR: Have you ever eaten anything that you have killed?

TC: "Yes, a pheasant."

JD: "No."

DBR: How many bones have you broken?

TC: "It's a lot – about 12 I'd say."

JD: "Too many! It's got to be about 10..."

DBR: Do you own a pair of slippers?

TC: (Laughing) "Yes, they're worn out and I absolutely love them!"

JD: "No! Definitely not."

DBR: You're in second and on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out in the last corner for the win?

TC: "Well I would always say yes but then I guess I would have to prove myself in that position. I would always try to make a clean pass but if I had to take someone out then I guess I would – but then that's easy to say."

JD: "Yes, no question!"

DBR: What is the highlight of your career so far?

TC: "Having had so many injuries it makes you appreciate what you do for a living even more so the highlight for me is to just be racing."

JD: "Winning the British championship rounds that I've won."

DBR: What car do you drive?

TC: "I've got a VW transporter and Claire's got a Golf that we share."

JD: "It's a VW Caddy van."

DBR: And if money were no object?

TC: "Aston Martin DB10."

JD: "Probably a Lamborghini."

DBR: Have you ever blamed a poor result on a non-existent 'mechanical issue'?

TC: "No, to be honest I'm the opposite where I will say it's my fault when there might be something that might not be quite right with the bike."

JD: "Ummm, yes. It was in '06, I couldn't say where but I was having a sh*t year and I wanted to blame anything but myself."

DBR: Have you ever been arrested?

TC: "No...well nearly but it's a really long story!"

JD: "No."

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

TC: "A little less good looking, it causes me problems all the time that I'm so goddamn sexy!"

JD: "I wouldn't put so much pressure on myself to ride the way I know I can."

DBR: What's the most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk.

TC: "I can't remember half the things I've done while drunk! To be honest nothing seems embarrassing when you've had too much to drink!"

JD: "It was when I was sick all over myself."

DBR: If you could meet any person – past or present – who would it be?

TC: "Steve McQueen, he was pretty cool..."

JD: "Cameron Diaz."

DBR: If you were shipwrecked on an island what three things would you take?

TC: "Umm, bit of chocolate definite, pair of shorts and some flip flops."

JD: "A blonde, a brunette and a ginger!"

DBR: What's your favourite film?

TC: "I think that Snatch is right up there."

JD: "The Guy Ritchie film RocknRolla."

DBR: What's your most annoying habit?

TC: "I don't know, farting probably..."

JD: "Winding people up – I don't know when to stop."

DBR: Where's

your favourite place on earth?

TC: "I think home to be honest.

There are some pretty good places out there but there's no place like home."

JD: "Sat on my motorcycle."

DBR: How many planets are there in our solar system?

TC: "I'd say there's about 10...is that right?"

JD: "Millions."

DBR: Do you have any fears or phobias?

TC: "Losing someone I love I guess – and I really don't like eggs!"

JD: "I don't like snakes and spiders, I'm not into creepy insects and things."

DBR: What's your most prized possession?

TC: "My black leather L-shape sofa that resides in our house. It's the only thing that I brought into our house, I dragged it from my bachelor days and to be fair it really doesn't fit in but I'm determined to keep it."

JD: "My money!"

DBR: Favourite race you've been in?

TC: "Landrake 2007 – I had an awesome battle with Mike Brown."

JD: "Probably St Jean d'Angely '07."

DBR: Have you ever been in a fight?

TC: "Yes and I won – although I was only about nine [and she was about seven – JP]!"

JD: "A few – I'd say I've won more than I've lost."

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

TC: "I haven't won a race in a long time so it might be but I'm not really qualified to answer that one!"

JD: "If it's a big important race...no!"

DBR: How do you have your steak?

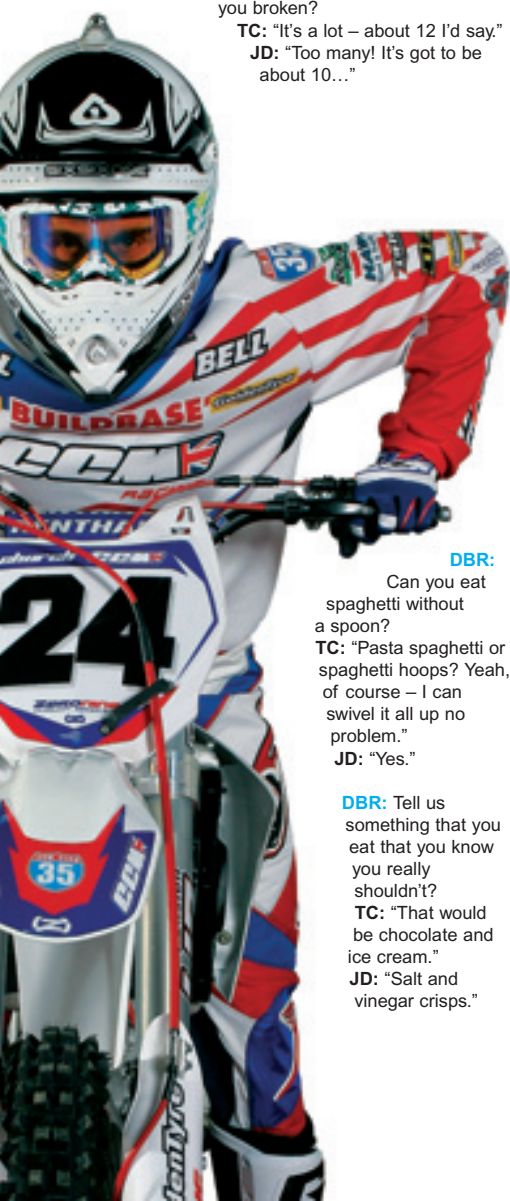
TC: "Medium rare."

JD: "Well done and crispy."

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

TC: "Blonde."

JD: "Both – at the same time!"



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PLUCK OF THE IRISH!

GORDY GOES DOWN HARD BUT NATALIE AND GRAEME HELP KEEP SPIRITS HIGH AS THE SEASON KICKS OFF...

Words by **Stevie Mills** Photo by **Sutty**

It was a gut-wrenching time for the thousands of GC fans throughout the land as word started to filter through that Gordy had been seriously hurt during a first turn incident at the Hawkstone Park pre-season international. That GC is now out of the High Dependency Unit and in time will make a full recovery is fantastic news when you consider the alternatives that were possible.

Club officials and first aid providers cannot be praised enough as their prompt and professional actions may well have saved Gordon's life – such was the immediate threat of the injuries sustained in his accident.

Professional motocross racers are no strangers to the pain of a broken bone or two – it is near-on second nature to this unique band of brothers. And physical pain fades into insignificance compared to the mental anguish of knowing that your chances of winning another title are all but gone, even before the startgate on the season proper drops.

Gordon Crockard is an intelligent athlete who has been an ambassador at the highest level not only for our sport but also for our country throughout the past 10 years. Whatever GC decides to do, retire from professional racing or not, the man's achievements will remain in the record books for many a year. He's simply the best Irish motocross racer ever. His opportunities are limitless within or outside the industry – let the dust settle, your injuries heal and take it from there bud.

Natalie Kane rode the wheels off her MVR-D Suzuki at round one of the ladies' British championship at Little Silver and the Irish lass showed the rest of the pack a clean pair of (high) heels in both motos.

Winning is one thing and no disrespect to her fellow competitors but Natalie is in a class of her own right now. In the second race Natalie

finished getting on for three minutes ahead of the second place runner, lapping up to fifth position on the way to the chequered flag.

At a time when Irish motocross fans are in need of a lift, we may just get it from Natalie as she embarks on a full season of GP action, racing against the fastest girls on the planet. But how will she get on in GPs? It's a hard call. Many of the top riders get to ride and race together throughout the season at national level, they will be on the pace straight away and have previous knowledge of some of the circuits on the GP trail.

Personally, I believe that our girl has the talent to run at the front if she can get out of the gate. Natalie has never been one to be overshadowed or feel inferior at any level of racing. Top five after the first three GPs? Well, if Stefan Everts

tipped her for possible world championship honours in the future I am going to go out on a limb on this one – I say podium results will come before the end of the season.

KTM UK rider Graeme Irwin made a solid start to his U21 British championship campaign. Racing for the first time under Roger Magee's awning, the teenager recorded 3-5 results for third overall on the day. Finishing third in the first race and posting faster lap times than race winner Jake Nicholls, Graeme then showed maturity riding through stiff opposition from an eighth place start in the final race.

He's got an interesting year in front of him. Cutting his teeth in a full season in the Maxxis, the ex-MXY2 champion has every opportunity to rise through the ranks as his experience grows. But it's a long road with many turns and one which may just throw up a surprise or two in the

pre-season arm-pump which hindered his ability to keep pushing. While still enjoying the experience young McCammond had a well publicised 'flying W' on a certain website.

Round one of the Irish championship kicks off at Desertmartin on March 28 when all will be revealed. The bullsh*t stops when the gate drops! Reigning champ Garrett will want to stamp his authority on the proceedings from the off – the KTM rider has been training hard and is well prepared to fight for title number three. The south of the border challenge will be headed by Stewart Edmonds aboard the factory-supported Italian TM. DNFs aside, Stew is fast enough to put some back-to-back wins together and is considered a serious contender.

A broken leg during a Spanish training camp has put paid to Ross Brown's early season aspirations which leaves Darren Leonard and



Graeme Irwin's looking good on the Red Bull KTM UK machine

Maxxis MX2 class.

In the British MMX series Gordon Crockard's hard-earned 10th overall was reward for blitzing through from two 24th-placed starts to eighth in the first race and 17th in the second outing after tangling with a few mid-pack riders along the way.

Relentless Suzuki's MX2 hopeful Martin Barr's result reads less than impressive – 15th overall aboard the RMZ450. Martin's starts were not good so it was a battle from behind in both motos. Third in 2009, the Maxxis will be tough this year and with a fleet of hot new talent let's hope that Barty can shake off his SX elbow injury before much longer.

Wayne Garrett and team-mate Michael McCammond made the trip to the MMX. In fourth at the end of lap one, Wayne suffered from

Thomas O'Grady to take up the slack. O'Grady has moved to the MX1 class full time – coming off an injury-plagued 2008 he's eager to mix it with the front runners this year. Sand is not his speciality though...

Team Moto-One by TAS Suzuki will be out in force and three-time Ulster champ Tommy Merton needs to start strongly if he is to step up to the mark while Robert Hamilton was expected to be on the money in the MX2 class. Hammy, who came a cropper at Blaris practice track and twisted his knee, is reportedly not as badly injured as originally thought – which is good news as the Portavogie youngster could do with a bit of luck.

That's it for another month – if you have any news for Blarney email me at stephendbr@aol.com

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"Look! I've won a hat!"

GUESSING GAME!

WITH EUROPEAN BIG HITTERS JUHA SALMINEN AND DAVID KNIGHT NO LONGER PLYING THEIR TRADE IN THE US GNCC CHAMPIONSHIP, AMERICA'S LARGEST OFF-ROAD RACE SERIES IS ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR A NEW CHAMPION

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

If there's one thing all professional motorcycle racers would give their right arm to do it's to dominate their rivals and chosen championship. No matter if they're a motocross, Moto GP, trials or enduro competitor, being able to dominate is something special.

Riders that truly dominate are few and far between. Some might be hard to beat at a certain race each year, others might enjoy a three, four, even five-race win-streak. But to be the rider who turns up at the races week after week both expecting and expected to win, well, that's the preserve of a select few.

For the last four years one manufacturer and two riders have dominated the US Grand National Cross Country series – KTM and their dynamic 'Euro' duo of Juha Salminen and David Knight. Each winning and then successfully defending GNCC championships, both Salminen and Knight are widely credited as having dominated during their four-year blitz of the cross-country championship. No other teams or riders stood a chance.

Both now racing in Europe – and both now competing for BMW – their departure from the GNCC championship has had a profound effect on the East Coast series. No longer are people wondering who will finish second – as they did between '05 to '08 – or guessing when rather than if either Juha or David would lift the title. Now, with a kind of new era dawning over the championship, for the first time in several years naming the rider that will go on to win the '09 GNCC series is, well, tough.

To have a rider dominate a championship is both a good and bad thing. While the skill, focus and effort that goes into to being the 'dominant one' is something that can be appreciated and

marvelled at by anyone who rides a bike, it doesn't exactly make for great racing. To have one rider and one team constantly winning, winning and winning some more can take the shine off things. Turning up to a race when you pretty much already know the result is good for no-one other than the winner and those associated with them.

Before the start of this year's GNCC opener there was just one thing most people agreed on – that the title wasn't going to go to a European rider. Sure, with a handful of Aussie and New Zealand riders competing in the prestigious XC1 class it might not go to a US rider – but it sure as hell wasn't going to go to a European.

So who is going to win the '09 US GNCC title? The honest answer to that question is that no-one really knows which is the great thing about no longer having an almost given championship title winner. And to be perfectly honest an 'open' championship couldn't have come at a better time.

With teams, riders, manufacturers and race organisers alike in the States feeling the effects of the global economic slowdown, arguably more so than in Europe, what the GNCC series needs more than anything else is drama – the kind of drama that can only be delivered by not knowing who is going to be doing the winning this year.

No fewer than eight riders and five manufacturers start the '09 GNCC series with optimism – hope that they might be able to win the '09 championship. That in turn means that their sponsors have optimism, which means that pretty much everyone in the XC1 class has something to be positive about.

The River Ranch GNCC didn't deliver overly exciting racing action – the choking, dusty

conditions in part put an end to that – but it did give some indicators as to who had done their off-season homework and showed which riders were serious about emerging as #1 in the post Salminen and Knight era.

Charlie Mullins, the much-hyped Suzuki rider who in past seasons has mixed blistering pace with occasional race wins and many disappointing performances, claimed a deserved win. Leading from the first corner to the last he made no mistakes and came home one minute ahead of his closest rival.

Second was Paul Whibley – the rider that finished second to Knight in '08. Putting in one of his come-from-behind charges to move through the entire XC1 Pro class and into the runner-up position, where Mullins was smooth and calculated Whibley was dogged and aggressive. Third – and riding the only two-stroke in the top three – was Nate Kanney who despite making two races worth of pit stops in one event managed to fly the flag for KTM.

Of the other expected front runners some, like Yamaha-mounted youngster Thad DuVall, saw the race end early due to injury. For Aussie Glenn Kearney it ended with an okay result having started the race injured while for fellow countryman Josh Strang it ended in disappointment after running out of fuel. For others it was an okay start to the championship. For all it was a demanding start to the series.

But more than anything it was exactly the start the US GNCC series needed – one full of hope and promise. Hope for the riders who had all but accepted the fact that no matter how well they rode they would still struggle to win and the promise of an unpredictable championship outcome...

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GOLDEN OLDIE 1!



I saw the 'Late Starter' headline in February's Rant section and I had to write in to say age is not a restriction in our sport! I rode MX in the late '60s and early '70s and used to transport my Greeves twin on a motorcycle and sidecar chassis to meetings!

Then I got married and had to give up riding. But I always remained a very avid follower of bikesport and at the age of 57 (I didn't want to have a pipe and slippers to watch TV and become old before my time!) and helped by Gavin Hockey Motorcycles of Colchester I bought a '06 Yamaha YZ450F and every piece of gear I needed.

I found myself practising at every opportunity last year and I have joined Woodbridge & DMCC and obtained an ACU licence and hope to contest all the Eastern Centre championship meetings this coming season! I am living the dream baby!

Good luck to all for '09 – especially Brad Anderson and Gordon Crockard.

Dave Cullum #72, via email

Cheers for the letter granddad – good to hear there's life in the old dog yet! And have a pair of Etnies on us – we don't think they do slippers so it better be some Alpha shoes instead...



WHAT YEAR?

I have recently bought a Suzuki RM85 off a mate but he didn't know the age. Not so long ago the clutch went and without the age I am unable to buy a replacement. Could you please give me some advice on finding out the age of my bike?

Also, we decided to give it a respray as it looked horrible in yellow – the fenders are white and the tank and rad guard are black so she's looking sweet. If only I had a nice bottle of Muc-Off to clean her after riding.

Matt, Oxon

The frame and engine numbers are all that is required. The frame number is on the headstock and the engine number should be on the motor – usually on the clutch side, stamped on the cover or engine case. Take these numbers and give them to your Suzuki dealer and they should be able to tell you the year.

GOLDEN OLDIE 2!

In the February issue of the magazine there was a letter in the Rant section called Late Starter. This letter was interesting but I found myself thinking '27 isn't really that old'...

My friend's dad is a 40-something who has always been interested in bikes but up until about three weeks ago was happy chuntering around on his old XR. Then totally out of the blue he goes and buys a CRF450 so he could take part in a hare and hounds race! As if that wasn't enough, he would only be able to get in about three hours of practice beforehand.

It's now a week after the event and after hitting a tree and cracking a casing he's still sore and thinking he should have gone for the 250! Despite this he managed 15 laps of the course and came eighth in his class proving that it's never too late to start.

Anyway, that's the end of my rant – so keep up the good work and keep making a great magazine!

Neil, East Lothian

Hmmm, we suspect your mate's dad is suffering a mid-life crisis but as the Editor's plunging head-long towards one of his very own we're not going to imply that this is a bad thing...

MX TO XC

Great work with the magazine – I have been a reader since I started riding at six and I am now 16.

I'm very keen on getting a '09 250F Yamaha for the coming season as I feel I could get a little more from it than from my current '09 KTM EXC125 two-smoker. The trouble I have is how to convert fully to enduro spec so I can compete in the BEC and GBXC and be competitive as I don't want a WR250F as I feel it is a bit more trail orientated.

Any help on spec and engine mods would be great as I need a four-stroke that starts, if there is one?

George, via email

This is Geoff Walker territory so over to you Irish... 'The WR is a good bike and although it is seen as a bit more trail orientated it really is a competitive enduro and XC bike with a couple of changes. I have spoken to one of the Yamaha team riders and they have simply fitted a set of MX cams and a DEP exhaust system with a super-long header pipe. I am not sure when the pipes will be in stock but it should be soon. The cams make the WR rev harder and the DEP system brings the lower end torque and power back above stock. It seems these two mods HAVE to run together to get the best results. Lawless is getting his hands on one in the very near future and no doubt he'll be getting me to do these mods for him so keep your eyes peeled for a feature soon...'

SNAP HAPPY!

First of all I would like to say keep up the good work with the mag – it's ace! I'm writing to you to get some opinions on my photography. I've been a keen amateur photographer for about six months now at Apex MX for my personal enjoyment and for others. Here are some pics I took – tell me what you think...

Joe, Birmingham

Hey Joe, for someone who has only been taking MX photos for half-a-year or less it has to be said that you've sent some very promising images that are pretty sharp, have good exposure and with decent composition as well! The only real advice we'd offer at this point is to keep shooting and experiment with different angles – oh and remember to have fun with it!



TRIBUTE

I've been racing motocross for about nine years and have met many great people and made a lot of good friends.

One of my friends, Matt Winter, died on February 1. Matt was a very good rider and was always in the top five at GEST and the A group at South Eastern meetings. The racing aside though Matt was a top bloke and a good mate, he was always a laugh and encouraging if I was having a bad day's riding. He would just tell me not to take it so seriously and just enjoy it.

He will be badly missed when we all go riding or on our annual trip to the des Nations – things just won't be the same without laidback Matt.

RIP Matt Winter #42 GEST and #82 SE Centre.

Jon P, London

RIP JEREMY

Jeremy Lusk will be missed. My heart goes out to all your loved ones and friends at this difficult time! I hope you backflipped over the Pearly Gates as you went in.

Marc, Suffolk



GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk

All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address.

Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

LETTERS WIN PRIZES

Write to Rant, get your letter published and you'll win a one-litre trigger bottle of marvellous bike cleaning fluid Muc-Off. And if we rate your letter highly enough you'll also receive our star prize – this month a pair of Etnies Alpha shoes.





FOX RACING

360 RACEWEAR

For 2009 the Fox 360 line-up takes an aggressive leap forward in a design, construction and style stylee. With badass bold prints, knockout colours and a winning history these special sets of 360 racewear are in high demand so grab a set now before time ticks by.

Price: Jersey £35 Pants £125 Pawtector £30
Supplier: foxracing.com
Contact: 0191 487 6100



MX UNO

MOTOCROSS 2008 PHOTO BOOK

With 240 full-colour pages and well over 300 incredible images this ace photo book from awesome Italian moto-snappers Stefano Taglioni and Enzo Tempestini is now available in the UK thanks to the wonders of the modern mailman. The 2008 MXGP season was an absolute scorcher with Tyla Ratray, David Philippaerts, Sven Breugelmans and Livia Lancelot all claiming world championship titles and this book does a sweet job of showing you all the action from the GP circuit through the lenses of Stefano and Enzo.

Price: 30 Euros
Supplier: mxuno.com
Contact: s.taglioni@mxuno.com

SHOEI

VFX-W HELMET

The new Shoei VFX-W is quite possibly the coolest motocross helmet ever made with its radically different look and sporty design. Made to the very highest standards and offering the very best in quality and fit this might just be the finest helmet you ever slip your noggin inside.

Price: from £359.99
Supplier: feridax.com
Contact: 01384 413841

NOBILIS GAMES

MOTO RACER DS GAME

One of the world's most popular racing games is back! Moto Racer has thrilled race fans for years and it's now available for the next generation of gamers to enjoy as Moto Racer DS becomes available for Nintendo's all-conquering portable DS console. A whole lot more exciting than Nintendogs or Dr Umbago's brain drainer, Moto Racer DS allows players to battle it out in four disciplines – Moto GP, Supercross, Traffic and Freestyle – that are guaranteed to keep you entertained on the bus, during school or in that all important board meeting!

Price: £29.99
Supplier: motoracer-thegame.com
Contact: contact@nobilis-france.com



GAERNE

FLEXBACK BOOT

Not quite so bobby dazzler as the all-new SG10s or groundbreaking SG12s, these fantastic Fastback boots from Gaerne are still an impressive and protective piece of kit. Despite the sub-£250 price tag making you think otherwise the Fastbacks do come complete with some top-of-the-line features such as an SG10-style pivot point on the ankles, a simple but effective buckling system and the very best in Italian design and construction. All in all these Fastbacks are a worthy purchase for any serious dirt biking competitor so check 'em out just as soon as you can.

Price: £240
Supplier: malcolmrathmellsport.com
Contact: 01423 772885





GOPRO

WIDE ANGLE HELMET CAM

Filming yourself doing crazy stuff is guaranteed to make you more popular, oh-so much cooler and a definite hit with the ladies. And the GoPro now makes being a hero to the masses even easier than ever as you can film what you're doing from a point of view prospective wide angle stylee – woohoo!

Price: £189.99

Supplier: freestylextreme.com

Contact: 0117 967 2240



TAG METALS

XT1 HANDLEBARS

There used to be a time when you only had two choices when it came to handlebars – stock or the one aftermarket brand that begins with R. Now of course that's not the case and there are a shedload of different handlebar brands with bends aplenty to keep even the fussiest of feckers satiated! That's why these super-tough tapered TAG XT1s come in seven different bends – so everyone is happy! Yay!

Price: £74.95

Supplier: rushracing.co.uk

Contact: 01404 549696



RACE-FX

REAR SPROCKET

The guys at Race-FX have gone colour coordinated crazy with their latest range of rear sprockets for dirty dirt bikes. Made from the finest aluminium around these chain wheels are super light and have machined grooves to help fling the muck clear too so should last longer than an average rear cog. Available in green for Kawasakis, red for Hondas, blue for Yamahas, orange for KTMs and so on they should be in a Race-FX supplied shop near you now so check 'em out!

Price: £25.95

Supplier: racefx.co.uk

Contact: 0845 450 1448

THOR RACING

LTD EDITION CORE RACEWEAR

If you've been watching AMA supercross action of late you'll notice that Chad Reed's been wearing both of these limited edition Core Racewear styles this year and if you're a fan of the 'Thunder from Down Under' you'll be glad to know that they'll be on sale in the UK from mid-March onwards in limited quantities. Named Marker (that's the stripy one) and Flying V (that's the polka dot stuff) they're priced exactly the same as the standard Core colourways but also come with a butt patch that you can get your mum – or perhaps butler – to sew on for that all important pro look.

Price: Jersey £44.03 Pants £137.01

Supplier: ultimatopursuits.co.uk

Contact: sales@ultimatepursuits.co.uk



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© Garth Milan/Red Bull Photofiles

HOT SAUCE!

You can keep your backflips, Superman seat grabs, Hart attacks and the like – sometimes you just can't beat a good ole fashioned big fat whip. And you don't have to be a freestyle bad boy to bust one out either as Red Bull Honda rider Ivan 'Hot Sauce' Tedesco demonstrates at Piru, California...

BACK TO BASICS!

AFTER THREE TOUGH YEARS TRYING TO MAKE IT ON THE GP CIRCUIT, ELLIOT BANKS-BROWNE IS DOWN-SIZING, REGROUPING AND AIMING TO REVITALISE HIS CAREER...

Words and photos by Sully





*Elliot goes berm-bashing
on the LPE Kawasaki*



Ever since turning pro four years ago Elliot Banks-Browne has pushed himself beyond his limits and taken knock after knock after knock in an attempt to legitimise himself as a top-notch motocross racer. While he's undeniably privileged to have the backing of a motocross mad family who aren't short a bob or two, Elliot's uphill struggle has proved that there's no quick way to success and the only way to secure recognition and respect in this sport is through blood, sweat and tears.

But like a lot of headstrong teenagers it took Elliot a year or two to realise this fact. It was only after failing to qualify all year long in his rookie GP season with the RWJ Honda squad – a team his dad, legendary spanner spinner Ian Browne, was practically running on a day-to-day basis – and another half-year of struggling to make the grade in Swift Suzuki's first year of competition that he put two and two together and set himself down the long path of improvement.

"Looking back that first year of GPs on the Honda was a mistake," admits Elliot. "I shouldn't have done them that year and I should have stayed home and done the Under 21s instead but I thought it would be a good idea to go to the GPs – I didn't actually realise how fast the riders were. The second year was the same really and I wasn't getting the results I should have. A lot of people started saying 'he's never going to do any good even though he's been given it all' and that was frustrating."

"I was getting my confidence knocked week-in, week-out by not qualifying for the GPs but rather than get downhearted about it I got myself a new trainer – Matt Wilson – and then worked hard on getting fitter. He helped me a lot and knowing that I was fit helped raise my confidence because I always knew beforehand that I wasn't even fit enough to be competitive all the way through the GP qualification races. Feeling fitter helped sort my head out and when I got fully fit that's when I started qualifying at the GPs almost every time."

The difference between the Elliot of '07 and Elliot in '08 was like night and day and it was obvious that the flashes of talent he had shown in the past were now being put to better use as he backed up the teenage flair with some good old fashioned behind the scenes hard work. Qualifying more often than not in the GPs – even when forced to go to the LCQs – and scoring some good results in the world and British championships



made many of the naysayers who'd constantly been on Elliot's back enjoy a nice slice of STFU.

But before Elliot could build towards another season of GPs in 2009 everything changed. The Swift squad ceased operation citing Stephen Sword's indecision over signing as a major factor and the 19-year-old from Bury St Edmunds was suddenly without wheels. But then from out of the blue Steve James and the LPE Kawasaki team stepped in and saved the day.

Steve's been involved in motocross and enduro for a good few years now and he's previously backed Ryan Voase before more recently working with Jamie Smith who made his and the LPE team's GP debut in Ireland last year. But for Elliot becoming a member of the LPE squad – alongside Smith and 16-year-old Daniel Arnold – means taking a step back from the international scene and concentrating on domestic action. But that's a challenge he's already relishing.

"This will be the first season since I've turned pro that I've gone into knowing that it's possible that I can challenge for and win a championship. My main goal is to be top three in the British – I'd obviously like to win some races but I know that Swordy and Simpson are gonna be hard to beat but I'm on a good bike so it's possible. In the MMX my goal was to win that – but I've sort of messed that up already – and I'd like to win the Fuchs Silkolene two-stroke series and the Red Bull Pro Nationals too."

"I'm actually really looking forward to the Red Bull Pro Nationals – I did the one last year and it was a lot of fun. The British championship can get quite samey but these have a good buzz around them and I think they're definitely gonna be a step in the right direction and with backing from a >>

**Elliot's best GP score
last year – 17-18 – came
in Portugal**

BANKS- BROWNE'S BEST!

A BUNCH OF ELLIOT'S
FAVOURITE STUFF...

Drink: "Gatorade."

Number: "Six."

Place: "Home."

Film: "Step Brothers."

Celebrity: "Will Ferrell."

Rider: "Ricky Carmichael."

Race: "Motocross des Nations."

Cereal: "Honey Nut Shreddies."

Pizza topping: "Meat feast."

Chocolate bar: "Boost."

Superhero: "Spiderman."

Cartoon: "Dora the Explorer."

Airline: "British Airways."

Meal: "Roast dinner."

Smell: "Roast dinner."

Dinosaur: "T-Rex"

Animal: "Dog."

Fruit: "Banana."

Vegetable: "Potato."

Tree: "The one with conkers
on – a horse chestnut tree."

Colour: "Red."

Car: "Bugatti."

ELLIOT ON...

HIS GRANDDAD THE BARON...

"My granddad John was six times British champion and twice runner-up in the world championships. I've watched a video of him racing and he was pretty fast on that old thing – I really couldn't believe it! He was hauling with barely any suspension – the bike was kicking him about all over the place."

THE WORST THING ABOUT MX...

"The worst things about motocross are the injuries and riding in the rain. You prep your goggles all nice with your tear-offs then the rain gets behind them and you have to take them off and there's mud and slop flying everywhere – it's horrible. Then if that's not bad enough you have to spend three days washing your kit off when you get home..." You have to wash your own kit? "No, I give it to my nan [laughs]..."

GOING TO AMERICA...

"I would like to go and race in America because the tracks seem to suit me a little more over there – I go most winters and I really enjoy it. It also might be necessary for professional racers to go over there to make a living soon rather than racing in the GPs where there's no prize money!"

RIVALRY WITH THE REVEREND...

"I've grown up with Jake [Nicholls] and we've always wanted to beat each other – even when we were practising we wanted to be faster than each other. We get on though and for sure it's gonna be good this year because we've both stepped it up – there's gonna be some good racing!"

UNCLE MARK...

"I hear he used to do mad things like scream on the starting line to scare people and he was the kind of rider that you never wanted behind you apparently. I know he was a British champion on a 125 but that was before I was born and I think I maybe only saw him race once when I was three so I don't remember it so well but I did see him ride here last week. He looks fast and sounds fast although on the stopwatch he isn't so fast any more."

AVOIDING THE LCQ AT ALL COSTS...

"In every heat race at the GPs last year there would always be a mad battle for the last few positions during the last few laps. There was one race in Italy where I was running 13th but right behind this Italian kid – Pellegrini – who was in the last qualifying position on the last lap. My goggles were off and I'd been trying everything for the whole race and he wasn't giving me any room. Coming into the last corner I went in to do or die and made the pass – it was a dirty move – and I looked back as I crossed the finish line and saw him sprawled out in the corner. I actually felt pretty bad and I got a telling off from Dave Nicoll for that one but you never want to go to the LCQ if you can help it!"



Elliot rode for the family-run Swift Suzuki team in '08



company like Red Bull they can't really go wrong!

"In fact I think that if the MCF achieve everything that they want to do – like get the races on national TV – then the series will be really good. Already they're paying better prize money than the British championship and that's a step in the right direction! In fact if you do well in the UK then you can make some good money – unlike in the GPs where there is no prize money!"

And that extra prize money will surely come in helpful for Elliot who – although he won't admit as much – must have taken a huge drop in salary for 2009! "Money's always good but it's not my main motivation when it comes to racing – I just want to do well for doing well's sake and I know I can do well with my new team. LPE Kawasaki is a really nice team to ride for, everything is really relaxed and cool in the team and everyone gets on really well.

"I've got Steve Henderson working with me this year, everyone knows him as grumpy Steve but I get on with him well – you just have to give as good as you get with him. The bike's definitely good this year with good suspension and a really strong motor. I like the standard Kawasaki – it seems to suit me well and I'm looking forward to racing it this year."

So with the promise of a successful year in the UK looming on the horizon what else does the future hold for Elliot? "I'd prefer it if I could keep doing my own thing in a way – it is great to have my family behind me but I think that sometimes it's good to do things off your own back and without having to rely on anyone.

"I want to get back to the GPs. I've only just turned 19 so I know there's plenty of time for me to do GPs because there are people still doing them in their 30s. Riding them has improved my speed no end probably because there's always someone to race with. Sometimes in the British it's possible that you can be just riding around on your own but at a GP you're always battling someone – even if it is for 20th place!"

CHEERS M'DEARS!

A QUICK THANK YOU FROM EBB...

"If it's cool I'd like to say a big thanks to all my personal sponsors – Bob Spalding Marine and Leisure, Hairburys hairdressers, Fox and Shift racewear, Sixth Sense Gym at Hereford and Ian Browne Racing Developments as well as all of the LPE Kawasaki team's sponsors of course."

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cas monster
race team



LEAP^{OF} FAITH!

OUR BIG MANXMAN TEACHES YOU HOW TO HANDLE BIG DROP-OFFS...

Words by **David Knight** Photos by **Sutty**

He's a big n' beefy dirt biking legend with two world enduro crowns and two AMA GNCC titles to his name – and now factory BMW star David Knight is sharing his riding secrets with DBR readers! Each month the Manxman will run through an essential technique for everyone's off-road arsenal in our brand new series – starting this issue with how to handle drop-offs. And when you've read and digested his latest lesson hook up to dirtbikerider.com for a video demo from the great man himself...



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"For the first instalment of Knight School I'm going to explain how to launch yourself off this six foot wall. Walls aren't an obstacle you'll come across very often in enduro but this is a technique that crosses over to all types of drop-off situations – jumping down banks and so on. This particular drop-off is at the bottom of a downhill strewn with slippery rocks and gravel which adds a little extra trickiness to the overall situation.

"The most important thing approaching any obstacle – and this drop-off is no different – is making sure you're in full control and at the right speed for you. You don't want to be going too fast and panicking as you approach the edge or so slowly that you're losing your balance. You should be covering both your brakes and also your clutch – how many fingers you use is up to you but one or two are ideal. On this particular drop-off I'll change down to second gear as I approach the edge while my body positioning remains central on the bike.

"As my front wheel begins to leave the edge of the wall I'll accelerate like I would if I wanted to lift the front wheel and do a small wheelie. I don't want to elevate my front wheel too high though because that would cause the front wheel to slap

down quite hard when I land so although I do move my bodyweight back on the bike – so my backside is over the rear mudguard – and I accelerate the plan is to keep the bike pretty much level at this point.

"As the ground approaches though I'll move forward on the bike while lifting the front wheel so I land with the rear wheel hitting the ground first. I then soak up most of the impact with my legs before accelerating away as hard as the conditions will allow.

"It's not a particularly hard technique to learn but one of the key things to remember when learning something new like this is to start small and work up. By dialling in your technique on smaller drop-offs you can increase your skill and confidence levels up to the point where a gnarly one like this will come very naturally.

"It's also important to keep your bike running sweet at all times too because the last thing you need when blipping the throttle on the edge of a wall like this is any bogging or hesitation – look after your bike and your bike will look after you!"

For video footage of Knight's drop-off technique go to www.dirtbikerider.co.uk



KNIGHT SCHOOL



SHREDBULL!

WITH MAJOR BACKING FROM ENERGY DRINK GIANTS RED BULL, THE MCF IS LOOKING TO TAKE MOTOCROSS TO THE MASSES AND CHANGE THE FACE OF BRITISH MX...

Photos by Ian Roxburgh

The 2009 season could see a major shift in fortunes for British motocross with the arrival of the Red Bull Pro Nationals. The newly-formed MC Federation have come out all guns blazing with an exciting, innovative new series in an effort to take motocross to the mainstream – and with the support of Red Bull they have every chance to reach out to the high street and attract new people to the sport.

With their two-stroke and Elite championships already a success over the past year, the MC Events company have decided to take things further and start their own organisation with a pro series to front it up. Former GP racer Matt Bates and DEP boss Craig Elwell were disillusioned enough with the sport to make the decision to try and improve not only the way motocross events are organised in the UK but also – and probably more importantly – how they're promoted.

Matt has a long-standing relationship with Red Bull after initially getting them involved with his successful SX races towards the end of the '90s and the energy drink giants are now actively more involved with motocross than ever before so it was a natural progression.

"I've been working with Red Bull with my events company for over 10 years so we have a great relationship and most importantly we share the same goal of giving young talent the chance to shine," says Matt. "They're into motocross far more now than when we started working together, after all they've become more globally recognisable. Obviously they're a partner of the world championships and they

support pro riders like James Stewart, Travis Pastrana and Antonio Cairoli but they're also very much into the philosophy of grassroots in all of the sports they're involved in and that's why we've got to together to build a solid foundation for motocross to grow in the UK."

The concept is to nurture riders through their schoolboy years and then into a pro championship that will showcase their talents and give them a possible career in the sport. The Red Bull Elite Youth Cup is an eight-round series of two-day events, three of which integrate with the Red Bull Pro Nationals. These events will have a festival feel which will hopefully make motocross more fun to those involved but also more of an attraction for the general public who know very little about the sport.

Everyone already into motocross knows it's family-orientated but to those outside the sport it can be seen as a bunch of trouble-makers illegally riding around wasteland. One of the main aims of the MCF is to break this misconception with positive, modern media and smart event promotion.

From the 65cc class right up to the Pro class they'll be racing some of the best tracks in the UK and getting the attention they deserve – something MCF's head of communications Jeff Perrett believes is critical if the sport is going to progress in the UK. "I wouldn't say it's just a case of progression, it's almost survival to a certain degree. With the world like it is at the minute and with so many things for people to do on the weekend we have to package motocross so it's accessible to everyone, not just the people >>





Carl Nunn and the rest of the MVR-D Suzuki team will contest the full series

CONFIRMED TEAMS

CCM

Tom Church, Jason Dougan, Ray Rowson

PAR HONDA

Brad Anderson, Gordon Crookard, Scott Elderfield, Luke Hawkins

DB RACING

Neville Bradshaw, Michael Phillips

TWISTED 7 HONDA

Bryan MacKenzie, Rickard Sandberg, Greg Fisher, Andreas Johansson

PROPPA.COM/STR

Jordan Rose, Nathan Parker

LPE KAWASAKI

Elliott Banks-Browne, Jamie Smith, Daniel Arnold

MOTOXTREME KAWASAKI

Lewis Gregory

RED BULL KTM UK

Stephen Sword, Jake Nicholls, Alex Snow, Graeme Irwin

MVR-D SUZUKI

James Noble, Matiss Karro, Carl Nunn, James Cottrell, Jack Hawes

RELENTLESS

SUZUKI

Martin Barr, Jamie Law, Scott Probert

SAMSUNG YAMAHA

Mark Jones, Wayne Smith

BLADEZ YAMAHA

Dave Willet

already involved in it.

"All too often I watch the races from the Canadian MX series and think 'why can't we make our motocross meetings look like that' and the answer is realistically there is no reason. The sport has so much vibrancy and passion but that never really reflects when you're at an event in the UK. With Red Bull investing into the series we can now set about trying to rectify that with well-organised, vibrant events, good riders racing a solid format and modern media such as regular online video clips."

There's certainly a fresh, youthful vibe going around about these upcoming events backed up by a reassurance of many years of experience among the MCF team. Clearly plenty of effort has been put in behind the scenes over the last couple of years to even get it to this stage – after all it's not every day a new series crops up with full backing from a company like Red Bull. The blueprint for success is there for all to see, like charging £10 for spectators and letting kids under 16 in for free. Instantly that makes the sport more accessible and will hopefully draw more people towards it.

Admittedly, the idea of mixing schoolboys with the pros isn't a new concept but with a revised format and making these events special it adds a different dimension. Teaming the kids with the pros for three events will give them a taster of what they aspire to be. They'll be able to learn and soak up the atmosphere of a major event and know what to expect if they ever make it. The kids will have a better understanding of working with the press and being in the limelight but in a way that doesn't heap loads of pressure on them.

"The Red Bull Pro Nationals are there at the top of the pyramid regarding our events but that doesn't mean they'll be all stiff and serious," adds Jeff. "When I raced GPs I loved the atmosphere as much as the pressure

of racing – they reminded me of all the schoolboy nationals when I was young, being part of something big. Obviously we'd like to think racers will take a great deal of pride in winning these championships but we also really want them to feel relaxed and have a good weekend, we want everyone involved to have a great experience. If you don't what's the point of going in the first place?"

Away from the track there will be plenty going on at the Red Bull Pro Nationals. The Red Bull Military DJ vehicle will be there pumping out the tunes and at some of the rounds there will be the Red Bull X Fighters FMX promo tour stopping by. In fact, expect to see these stars putting on a show at round three of the Pro Nationals at Canada Heights on July 19. There will also be a pro-celebrity minibike race where you can expect to see several household names going bar-to-bar. All in all there'll be plenty going on to make a great weekend, something Matt is keen to make sure people will remember.

"Motocross is an amazing spectacle but so many people would never know," says Matt. "We have to make the meetings like a festival. When you go to a music festival for example, primarily you go to watch the acts but it's also everything else about the weekend that makes it memorable, there's always so much going on. Everyone loves going to the GPs to see the best riders but they also love the atmosphere."

"We also have to remember that it's ever more difficult to become a GP rider but our sport seems to be growing more with more fast riders that don't have a domestic scene to prove their value or earn a living – this is yet again a key focus for our team to develop. Look at the current strength of UK Superbike racing compared to World Superbike as a great domestic analogy."

The weekend format is simple really. The Elite Youth



CALENDAR

RED BULL ELITE YOUTH CUP

Landrake	April 18/19
Thorsway	May 9/10
Whitby	June 6/7
Cusses Gorse	July 4/5
Wakes Colne	August 8/9
Canada Heights	August 15/16
Pontrilas	September 5/6
TBA	October 3/5

* Incorporates with the Red Bull Pro Nationals

RED BULL PRO NATIONAL

Landrake, Cornwall	April 19
Whitby, Yorkshire	June 7
Canada Heights, Kent	July 19
Canada Heights, Kent	August 16
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INJURIES GO HAND-IN-HAND WITH OFF-ROAD RIDING BUT WITH A LITTLE UNDERSTANDING AND PREPARATION MANY CAN BE LESSENED – OR AVOIDED ALTOGETHER...

Words by Alan Milway

Monday morning brings with it reports from the weekend's racing. Stories abound of victory, disappointment and – unfortunately – often injuries. In sports such as motocross, enduro and even trials, crashes and their resultant injuries are inevitable. Although some injuries can be seen as part and parcel of riding motorbikes, many can be lessened or avoided all together. An understanding of what injuries actually are can help with the recovery process and also offer some ideas how to try and prevent them.

Some of the main types of injuries are listed and discussed here to try and give some form of explanation and suggestions as to ways and means of preventing, lessening and avoiding their occurrence. You may be surprised to hear how positive physical preparation is in avoiding serious injury.

JOINT INJURIES: Occur often as a result of twisting a joint. Connective tissue is damaged and this not only causes pain but causes instability at the joint. Ligaments joining bone to bone are very susceptible to this type of injury – especially in the knees. This can partly be attributed to the 'success' of the motocross boot at transmitting any twisting force away from the ankle.

DISLOCATIONS: These often happen as a result of a hard impact with the ground that causes one of the bones at a joint to be displaced. The shoulder joint is very susceptible to this with the humerus bone being displaced. It is relatively easy to re-seat the bone into the scapula but there is often damage to the ligaments around the joint. This can cause problems in the future and rehabilitation often involves strengthening the 'rotator cuff' muscles around the shoulder to help keep stability. Strong muscle development may help prevent or lessen the chances of a dislocation.

MUSCLE/SOFT TISSUE INJURIES: These are relatively common in training and can occur due

to a crash or while riding. Small fibres are torn from their attachment to a tendon and the connective tissue is also damaged. This explains why, often, muscle injuries are felt near to a joint. It is important to use this simple principle if you are faced with a muscle injury:

Rest – stop training or riding

Ice – apply a cold ice pack to the area

Compression – use pressure to hold ice pack to the injured area

Elevation – raise the limb and keep weight off it. This should be measured in hours, not minutes!

FRACTURES: A fracture is a broken or cracked bone. Although relatively uncommon in many sports, dirt bike riding does see more than its fair share of broken bones. Usually the result of a heavy blow or a serious twisting force, fractures can be a straightforward crack to the bone requiring a six-week period immobilised in a cast. However, compound fractures result in the bone breaking the skin and protruding through it. This results in the need for surgery, a long period immobilised and often a lot of physiotherapy to regain full range of movement.

Some injuries can't be foreseen and in a sport where the goal is to go as fast as possible around a rutted, jump-filled track, injuries are inevitable. However, there are many times when injuries are sustained that could have been minimised or avoided.

PROTECTIVE KIT: This has come on in leaps and bounds and with the materials and money invested in development we can now wear strong, tough but lightweight protective equipment. Boots, helmets, goggles etc are standard issue and are now joined by the neck brace.

I think it might be excessive to don every item of protective equipment you can find but do consider what may help. I certainly know that the reason for the limping I am suffering today is due to leaving my knee pads at home in my

cupboard... Neck braces have found favour recently and may help prevent possible paralysis.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION: Coming off the couch after a week watching TV in the evenings to a difficult track on a Saturday and trying to keep up with the fast boys is an easy way to ride above your limits and risk injury. Physical conditioning, sufficient nutritional intake and some form of warm-up will play a big role in helping you stay on the bike for longer.

An improvement in cardiovascular fitness will mean that it is easier to maintain concentration at high effort levels and you will be able to sustain exercise for longer without a drop in technique. Strength gains also have a profound effect on injury prevention and an increase and muscle mass can help strengthen a joint. Flexibility is also an area that is often overlooked but will go a long way to avoiding injury.

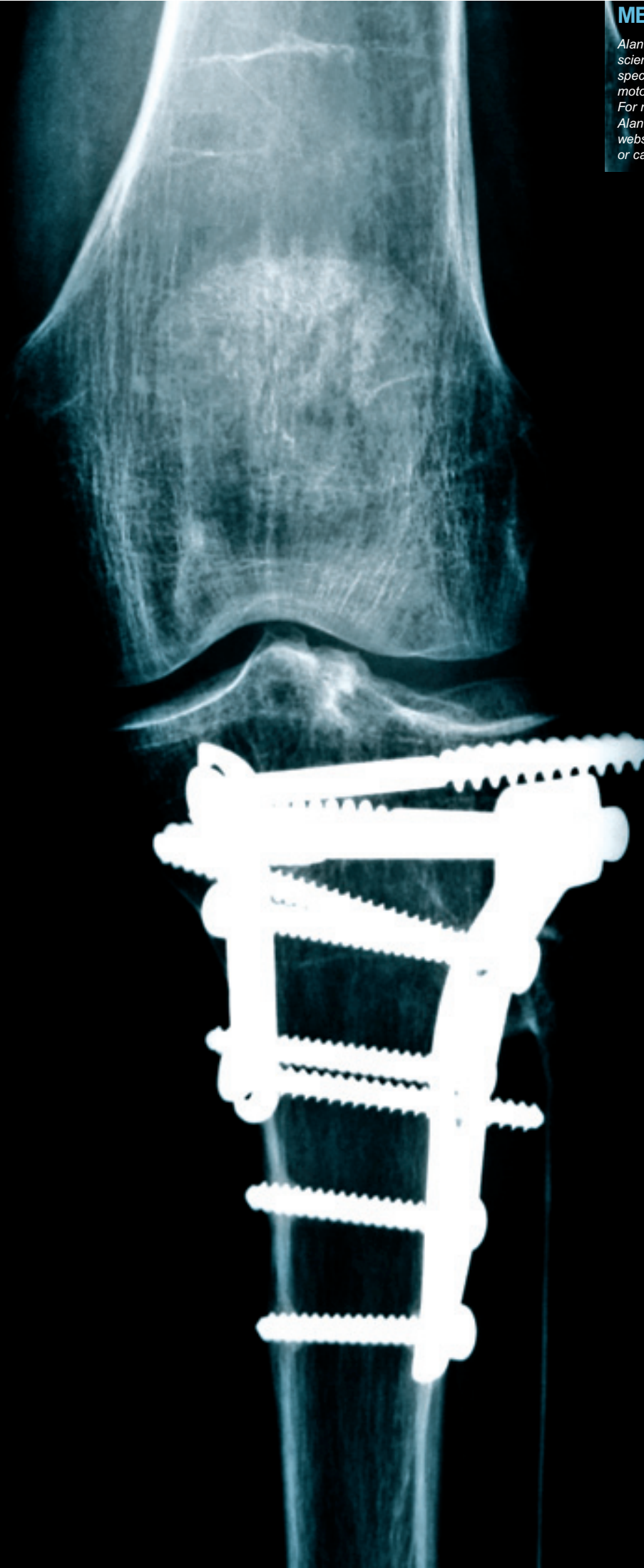
Increasing the range of motion about a joint means that if you do come off – or stick a leg out into a rut – you have a better chance of avoiding injury due to connective tissue damage. Stretching – especially if you are regularly lifting weights – will be very effective. It is even worth considering a yoga class if you want a strength and flexibility challenge – be warned though, it's hard work!

In the event of an injury, the first thing to address is initial treatment (see the RICE principle). Having an injury properly assessed will avoid a lot of problems in the long run and sometimes fractures are not spotted for a week or so as the rider is too stubborn to even go to A&E.

If you are unfortunate to suffer an injury, once the swelling and pain have subsided gradual light work can begin. Keeping active while protecting the injured limb or joint will keep your cardio fitness up and the overall loss to fitness can be greatly minimised. Although each and every injury is different, physiotherapy to regain strength in the joint or muscle is important and also to regain the range of motion required.

MEDICALMILWAY

Alan Milway is a qualified sports scientist who runs MX Fitness specialising in training motocross and enduro riders. For more information on how Alan can help you train go to his website www.mxfitness.co.uk or call him on 07810 827427





Dougie's sublime trials skills come in handy on the Fat Cat extreme enduro course



SECOND COMING?

THE MOST SUCCESSFUL TRIALS RIDER IN THE HISTORY OF THE SPORT, NOW DOUGIE LAMPKIN'S CONSIDERING A MOVE INTO INDOOR AND EXTREME ENDUROS...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Suttly

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DOUGIE ON...

EXTREME RIVALS >>>

Despite the racing aspect to indoor and extreme enduro events, the majority of the top runners – think David Knight, Taddy Blazusiak, Wayne Braybrook and Graham Jarvis – come from a trials background. So surely this new form of racing should suit Dougie down to the ground?

"Obviously Taddy's switched from trials and now everybody thinks if anybody does it they can just shoot straight to the top but make no mistake, Taddy's done a hell of a lot of work to get where he is and a hell of a lot of training to learn a completely new trade. He's done really, really well.

"In a lot of events [a trials background] is a massive advantage but like in Hell's Gate for example the actual trials areas were too hard to ride so I were pushing the same as everybody else but there were places that I was riding up that others weren't. And the indoor events are not really hard enough."

So, is Dougie's new-found interest putting the willies up Blazusiak and David Knight?

"I don't think so. Not at the moment. To be honest Taddy's been giving me some quite good advice as well as what David has. David's taken me out practising a couple of times back in the Isle of Man. No-one's really worried about me yet but I can certainly make people worried I think."

Legs waving in the air, peak kissing the front mudguard on his way over the bars – this is not an everyday occurrence for Dougie Lampkin. But, to be fair, the 12-time world trials champion has just been ejected from a 450 Beta enduro bike and that's not an everyday steed for Dougie Lampkin. Although given time it might just be...

We're over at Fat Cat Motoparc near Doncaster to watch Dougie tackling the evil extreme enduro course and to find out just what's happening with Britain's – and quite possibly the world's – most successful ever off-road rider.

From 1997 to 2003 no-one else even got a sniff of the WTC crown as Dougie reeled off seven consecutive world outdoor titles – the first five of which he paired up with the world indoor trials title as well. And he's still competitive on the world stage, although without a round win – to make it a magic 100 – for the past couple of seasons.

So why, at the ripe old age – for WTC riders – of 32 when he should be considering his retirement from top-flight competition, has Dougie suddenly found himself morphing from the seasoned trials campaigner to the new kid on the block in extreme and indoor enduros?

"I don't need a new career. From what I set out to do, what I've achieved is far beyond anybody's expectations but I can't get away from the fact that I just love riding bikes. I ache sometimes in the mornings but I've tailored my training towards that now. I can't ride for three or four hours every day, I ride for an hour-and-a-half every day. And I've got different priorities now – I've got a wife and two children and I like to spend the afternoons with them and doing general family things. There's a lot to

consider on the 'new career' but I've always been well supported by my family and always will be.

"Red Bull wanted me to ride the Red Bull Knock Out in the middle of November last year and although it was basically a five kilometre motocross track I did really enjoy it – it was something different and an opportunity to ride in a top class competition without any pressure on. Then I decided I'd do The Tough One – I took up the challenge a little bit because Knighter said I should have a go."

The Tough One in January was Dougie's first UK foray into the growing sport of extreme enduros and he didn't disappoint, grabbing second off the start and after two hard-fought hours taking fourth overall. At the end of the day he confessed that maybe his start was a little too good as while there are few people in the world who can ride over things as well as Dougie, he's not used to riding at speed – especially with the likes of David Knight breathing down his neck.

Still, with dad Martin pretty handy on a scramby bike (plus, of course, world trials champion in 1975) and uncles Arthur and Sid both tough competitors on the Euro scrambles scene in the '50s and '60s, speed's certainly in the Lampkin genes. Just maybe a bit of familiarity is called for...

"My uncle Arthur was as good as they get back in his day so speed's in the family, it's just never been my forte. It needs a lot more work to take it to the next level. At The Tough One I ran up that hill far too quick and got off second, started getting a bit too excited and fell off twice in the first half-a-mile – all of a sudden I was back down in what felt like eighth or 10th. That was the problem, getting real speed straight away. Speed's something that >>>



"I've got a reet big peak!"



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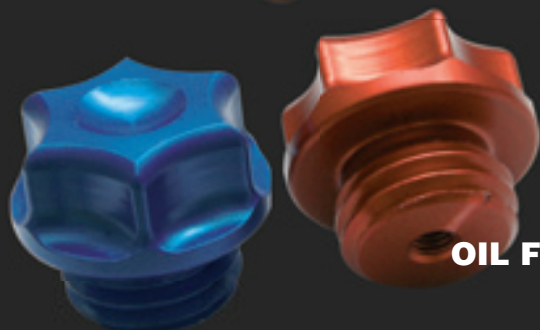
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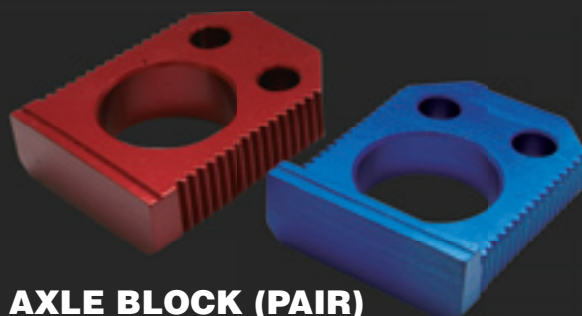
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DOUGIE ON...

TRIALS AND TRAINING >>

"There's still a chance of a 100th win but I do need things to go my way with the type of event and the conditions. I've been close the last couple of years and at Sheffield this year I was leading halfway through the final and that was in an indoor. I can definitely still beat them but their level is very, very high and they keep raising the bar do them boys."

"I'm obviously not riding the [full] world indoor championship. Last year I wasn't enjoying going to the races and really not enjoying riding them so I decided that the best thing to do would be to stop that and obviously that's freed up more time. But I'm still really enjoying riding the bike so I wanted to do the world outdoor championship and I'll do a couple of rounds of the British championship but that's pretty much just for John. And I'll do the Scottish as well but that's about it on the trials front."

"I still absolutely love riding a trials bike but I don't like finishing fourth, fifth, sixth – that's not what I'm about. I've never ridden to make up the numbers, I've always ridden to win. And that'll be the problem if I try to do something else – I'll have to win – so do I really want to start all over again? Obviously I've had a really successful career and I'm not trying to prolong it by making the numbers up doing either trials or something else."

"It's difficult to say at the moment – it's all happened so quickly – but there is interest in me riding [extreme and indoor enduro] events next year already so I'm going to have to start thinking whether I want the big change. If I did do it then it would involve a lot, lot more training."

HELL'S GATE >>

"Hell's Gate is bloody ridiculous really. It's strange to think you have to start pushing your bike up something – it's not something I've ever had to do before – but it went really well. I had a few problems but managed to get where I was and still felt in very good condition after such a long time on the bike."

"It's a different world and it's a bit of a strange sport. Pushing your motorbike is a bit of a challenge but it seems to be one that the Italians especially seem to take up. It basically made The Tough One look like a normal motocross race – if they put an event on like that over here I think the English lot would just be moaning in bucketloads. I don't think you'd get away with it!"

"I'd seen that hill on the DVD before we went and thought it looked steep but when you get there it's just unbelievable. For the last 30 yards I had a person under each leg and a person under each arm dragging me up, dragging the bike up. I got to the top and had to hold on to Martin Craven. My legs just wouldn't work, wouldn't hold me up."

Dougie wrestles the Beta to the Hell's Gate podium



comes from more practice and more hours on the bike."

Following The Tough One things started to snowball for Dougie and he found he was in demand as first the Beta factory and then event promoters, encouraged by his success, wanted to showcase his skills on a different stage.

"Other stuff came up fair quickly then. I was going to do a week-long test on the trials bike out in Italy and the factory had seen I'd gone okay in The Tough One and their team riders weren't too keen on riding in the indoor enduro championship. As the second round was in Italy they asked if I fancied it so I thought 'I'm already there, hopefully I'll not make a fool of myself' – I just wanted to qualify for the final which I did and finished fourth."

"The organisers from Madrid were there and they asked if I would ride and I finished third – from what started off as a bit of fun with no pressure, all of a sudden there's a bit of expectation now. I'm used to pressure and expectation but it was nice not to have it for a change – that was short-lived I'm afraid!"

"It's still just a bit of fun really but that could change – if the factory want me to do various things then I'm open to trying different events but at the moment I'm riding Erzberg in the middle of June and then Red Bull Romaniacs in the middle of

August and really that's it. I'm not sure about Last Man Standing – there's no date and no venue yet so we'll see what happens."

From Spain it was back to Italy where Dougie took part in the super-tough Tuscan extreme enduro Hell's Gate which involves riders killing themselves all morning trying to qualify for the afternoon's main event where the chosen few get a chance to kill themselves all over again. The event was won by Taddy Blazusiak from WEC regular Alessandro Botturi on a brace of KTM two-smokers but Dougie made sure of the podium with an epic ride that proved that his form so far aboard the 450 thumper was anything but a fluke.

Watching Dougie wrestle the big Beta around the tight confines of the Madrid indoor course chasing Taddy and co on their nimble 250 two-strokes, you can't help thinking that he'd go much better on something a little less bus-like – a view reinforced during our photoshoot when I nearly put my back out lifting it off Dougie after he'd nipped a tree. So despite his WTC deal with the Beta factory and the strong family connection (cousin John's the UK Beta importer) does Dougie think he'd be better off on, say, something Austrian with half the strokes?

"It's difficult to say – I've never ridden one. I do feel comfortable on my bike >>





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HYBRID





when I'm actually riding it but when it starts getting tight and twisty or when you're pushing it then obviously it is a bigger bike – a lot bigger bike. I'd say there's between 15 and 18 kilos difference to what the others are riding. Coupled with me on the top because I'm bigger than everyone else then it's a fair lump – especially in these extreme events.

"I don't do anything to make up the numbers so if there's a better opportunity then that needs to be looked at. I've already had a little bit of interest from a couple of places if I do want to continue in this sport and that's amazing after riding the bike a couple of times and it's a surprise. But I can't really say I'd go a lot better on another bike because I've never tried one."

So far it's fair to say Dougie hasn't taken extreme and indoor events too seriously. For a rider famed for the legendary levels of dedication he applied to his trials career it comes as a surprise to discover he hadn't touched the bike between The Tough One and the indoor event in Genova. And away from competition he's only put in about 90 minutes in the saddle since.

"I've basically got a standard bike here and I borrowed a bike off the factory while I was out there and you can't just do that if you're wanting to fight with the top boys. It's an interesting time with the extreme events and the indoor enduro events – they're

really popular, it's something that's a bit new and it's nice to be involved with them.

"That's why I'm surprised at the level I have got to by basically just turning up and riding. The next step is a different story. There's considerable room for improvement – I've never tried to set the bike up, I don't understand how they work. The bike I ride here is completely standard. The bike I ride across there has a frame that's a bit different although I've taken out the factory engine and put in a standard 450 because it just felt too different and too difficult to control. There's a lot of work I can do there but it's a lot of work everywhere really.

"It's ridiculous to finish on the podium in my second indoor event – it's a completely different fitness to what I'm used to. Having said that, Cervantes and Blazusiak are not just a little bit better – they're a lot better – so I'm under no illusions that I can just do a little bit of practice and fight with them. If I want to fight with them then I really will have to do some serious training."

Unlike the rest of us mortals who would happily slice off bits of our body to have the smallest sliver of his talent, you can't help thinking that Dougie's destiny lies in his own hands – if he wants to fight with the likes of Cervantes and Blazusiak he'll have to train hard. And if he trains hard then he will be fighting with them. It's all down to Dougie...

FAMILY TREE



Uncle Arthur

Factory BSA (scrambles and trials)
Two-time European 250cc scrambles
championship runner-up
SSDT winner
Scott Trial winner



Mart

1975 world trials champion
SSDT winner
Scott Trial winner



Uncle Alan (Sid)

Factory BSA (scrambles and trials)
SSDT winner
Scott Trial winner



Cousin John

WTC round winner



Dougie

12-time world trials champion



Cousin James

Dougie's ex-minder
Former British Expert champion

TRAIL BLAZER!

A DRUNKEN PHONE CALL FROM SYDNEY GETS JACK THINKING ABOUT JEFF LEISK – THE ORIGINAL 'FLYING FRECKLE' AND THE MAN WHO PAVED THE WAY FOR THE LIKES OF McFARLANE, METCALFE AND REED...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

My phone recently rang at two o'clock on a sunny Monday afternoon. "Guess who this is?" cackled a piercing Antipodean voice. I couldn't. "It's Stiffy!" shrieked my former World Superbike commenting colleague at the BBC, Aussie Lee Diffey. I listened, deafened and bewildered. It must be around two in the morning his time...

"I'm drunk in a bar in Sydney and guess who I've got with me?" howled Diffey. I tried. Parrish? Muggas? Chris Vermeulen? Then gave up. Stiffy's voice rose another octave. "Jeff Leisk!" he hollered gleefully, handing me instantly over to someone I'd neither seen nor spoken to in nearly 20 years.

The original 'Flying Freckle', Leisk was the first full-on Aussie MX export – racing successfully in both the USA and Europe – and now runs KTM's Australian operation from his hometown of Perth. So quite what Jeff was doing at 2am on a Tuesday getting trashed with Stiffy in a bar in Sydney remained unclear. Rather like their speech!

In recent years we've got used to ambitious young Aussies like Andrew McFarlane, Brett Metcalfe and the ultimate

achiever, Chad Reed, breaking into Europe and transferring swiftly to the USA. But when the adventurous young Leisk pioneered this move 25 years ago he had no-one to show him the way. The cool, thickly freckled kid with dark, chocolate brown eyes and a floppy mane of auburn hair had started racing at the age of eight. His dad Bob was a race promoter destined to organise that outrageous, ill-fated supercross at Chelsea's Stamford Bridge in 1984, the same year as his son first ventured to the UK.

Born in November 1964, Jeff won his first national title as a 14-year-old in 1979 and went on to rule the 'Mr Motocross' Australian championship in 1984 and '85. A one-off ride at Newbury's 1984 British 250 GP netted him points in the second moto and he'd planned to hit the States in 1986 even before cracking vertebrae during practice for the 1985 MX des Nations at Gaildorf. We visited the disconsolate 20-year-old after the race that Sunday night (when he ended up sharing a ward, ironically, with current KTM US competitions boss Kurt Nicoll) and the USA seemed a

long way from his lonely mind.

But Jeff recovered well and landed a bike and bits deal from affable Honda America team manager Dave Arnold who he'd met at the MX des. Leisk won a couple of rounds of the California Golden State series, got hurt at the San Diego supercross and returned to grab a few late-season podiums in the 125cc Nationals. Ninth overall, he suffered from the same Honda cutbacks that axed Johnny O'Mara – but Yamaha hired him on a full-factory contract for 1987.

It was a good year. Always an adaptable all-rounder, Leisk finished fifth in the 250 SX series and lay third in the 125 Nationals before injury intervened and dropped him to sixth behind that other future European star Donny Schmit.

By now known as 'Croc', Jeff knew he rode better on bigger bikes. But Yamaha wanted him to stick with 125s so he headed back to Honda on a support role alongside Ricky Johnson. Fourth in the 1988 500 Nationals behind 'RJ', Ron Lechien and Jeff Stanton, Leisk also placed sixth on his 250 in both supercross and outdoors. >>

A RACE WINNER ON HIS FIRST VISIT TO NAMUR IN 1989





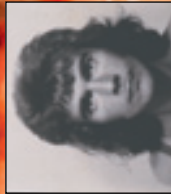
VICTORY IN THE 1990
FRENCH 500 GP, BUT
DOUBTS STILL LINGER
DESPITE SUPPORT OF
CLOSE FRIEND XAVIER
OUDOUARD (LEFT)

DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT

Bearer	Titulaire	★Wife	Femme
Occupation	GRAPHIC DESIGNER		
Place of birth	BILLINGHAM		
Date of birth	9/3/47		

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...



Jack Burnicle

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LEISK IN HAPPIERTIMES,
ON THE ROSTRUM AT THE
1989 BRITISH 500 GP
WITH KURT NICOLL (LEFT)
+ DAVE THORPE



JEFF LEISK SOARS TO
VICTORY IN THE 1990
FRENCH 500 GP AT BROU



LEISK'S SECOND PLACE
RIDES AT THE 1988
MX DES LANDING HIM
A FACTORY HONDA
500 GP RIDE



But he hated living in Los Angeles. Hailing from the relative peace and quiet of Western Australia, he disliked the crowds and the smog of the LA basin. "I felt homesick and wanted to spend more time in Oz," he admitted. "The shorter European season looked tempting!"

So he crossed the Atlantic and turned heads with an impressive performance on a Honda at the massive '88 MX des in France where he placed second 500 behind Lechien and Australia only missed the rostrum by one point. That ride, capitalising on his good relationship with Honda, landed Leisk a 500 GP berth in the HRC squad alongside Eric Geboers and Dave Thorpe, he and Eric backed by Italian clothing company Chambers.

In a sensational debut at Valkenswaard, Jeff led the first moto until running out of fuel on the final lap, then won the second! While Thorpe and Geboers waged war for that 1989 world crown, Leisk became the first Aussie to win a motocross grand prix – beating the big guns in the swooping sands of Ruskeasanta in Finland and the hard-packed blue groove of San Marino. He also gloriously defeated his duelling team-mates in the first moto at Namur before snatching second in the championship from Geboers at the final round in Luxembourg.

Leisk then proved his ultimate versatility with a third-night triumph in the Paris Bercy Supercross in December that year, where he beat Johnson and Jean-Michel Bayle to become

the first non-American winner of a Main Event in the Palais Omnisports!

A smart, smooth rider with a silky style essential to his endurance, the little Australian – who weighed in at 155 pounds – found himself, with Thorpe struggling to adapt at Kawasaki, the pre-season favourite for 1990. But the absolute dedication demanded of champions (and so dauntingly demonstrated by Thorpe) was never Leisk's bag. He spent two months 'wintering' in sun-blessed Perth and for the European GPs his close friend, Bercy entrepreneur Xavier Oudouard, found him an apartment in his own hometown of Biarritz, the Atlantic surfing paradise of south west France.

But Jeff never looked comfortable with being the people's pick for the crown. He'd much preferred his low-key role of '89 when Geboers and Thorpe hogged the limelight. He won the season-opening international at Beaucaire – traditionally a blight on any world title aspirations – and the GPs duly started badly. Cruelly flattened by Jacky Martens, he left Valkenswaard concussed and pointless although he did win the first moto of round two in Switzerland.

Who'd have ever guessed it would be his last? Second and third places earned him a third and final grand prix victory in a sun-scorched French round at Brou, a hugely popular result with the vast home crowd that hoisted him briefly back into championship contention with Geboers and Billy Liles. Yet even in this moment

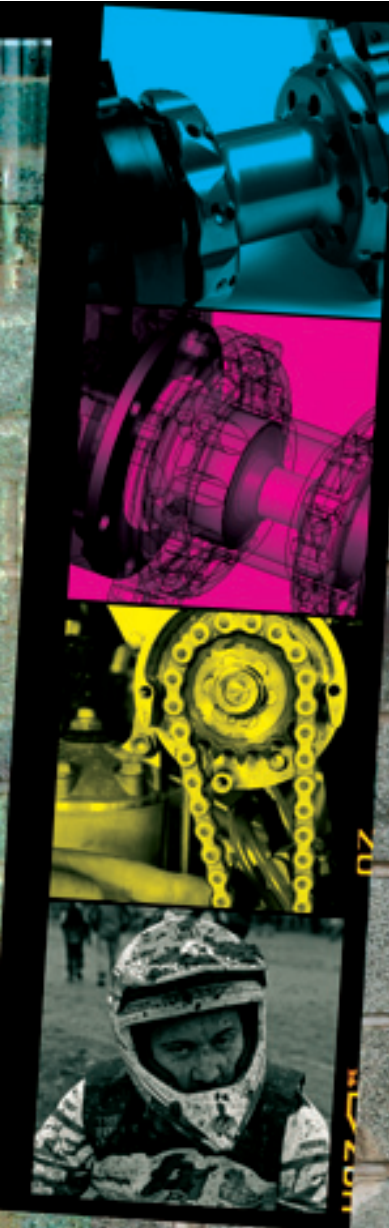
of triumph Jeff looked insecure, unhappy and uncertain.

"I always have a great time in Australia," he confessed that evening. "You're with your mates, not working. It's summer there and winter here. You need a lot of resolve to leave your family again and when the results aren't there you begin to think a bit. Being the underdog last year was a better mental situation. I feel no more pressure from Honda. It's more from outside the team. People think second last year, first this. I'm aware of that."

Jeff ran his fingers through his long hair and sighed. "At times I've lost my line of thought," he owned up with painful honesty. "Thinking more of winning than actually how to win. You've gotta do your groundwork."

He never got the chance. A broken finger put him out of the next two rounds, his comeback ride coinciding with the hostile Shropshire sand of Hawkstone Park. Fourth in the first moto, he retired from the second with stomach cramps and left a lowly seventh in the table, 139 points behind eventual champion Geboers...

Jeff Leisk scored points only twice more in the second half of a desperately disappointing season and slipped to 10th in a world championship many felt he was destined to win. At the tender age of 26 he flew home for the last time at the end of 1990 to the welcoming warmth and surfer's sunshine of Western Australia and gave up on his grand prix dreams. |



2x2

A TWO-WHEEL-DRIVE BIKE ISN'T AN ENTIRELY NEW CONCEPT BUT SO FAR ONLY ONE ENGINEERING COMPANY – CHRISTINI TECHNOLOGIES – HAS COME CLOSE TO PERFECTING AN ALL-WHEEL-DRIVE SYSTEM FOR YOUR DIRT SCOOT. AND WE GOT TO TEST IT...

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Suttty



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The idea of two-wheel-drive dirt bikes is far from new but until recent times it has been just a dream to have a useable bike which is fun to ride and doesn't weigh more than a double decker bus!

The fine people at Christini Technologies Inc from the city of Philadelphia in the good ol' U S of A have been working for years to perfect the Christini AWD system for dirt bikes. Steve Christini is the man with the masterplan and his engineering plan has been realised in the form of the AWD system which is being applied to more and more different models of bikes as each week progresses.

The test system we have here at DBR HQ is set on a KTM 300 EXC bike. The bike has been run in the Erzberg Rodeo and took the speedy Californian Kyle Redmond to a fifth-placed finish with the sister bike in sixth place piloted from a second row start by legendary American trials ace Geoff Aaron. Mr Aaron also took a hard-earned fifth in the Red Bull Romaniacs after five tough days in the saddle of the Christini-kitted KTM 300.

The guys at the HQ want the AWD system tested in the toughest conditions to help them prove their development strategies are working and at this time they have what seems like a near perfect system in place.

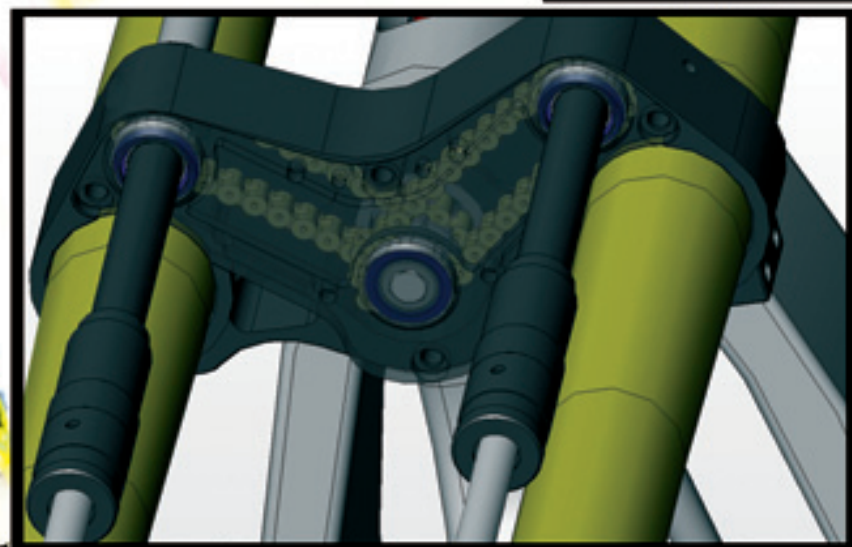
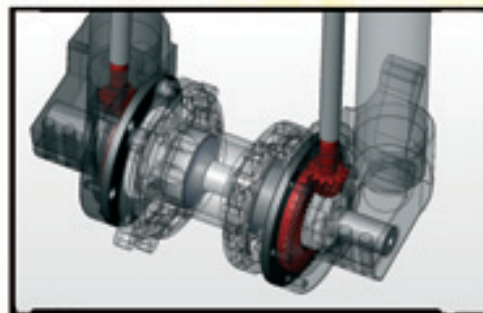
HOW IT WORKS >>

The system works as a mechanical unit, rather than a hydraulic unit. When the AWD system is engaged via the handlebar mounted lever the drive for the front wheel is taken from the final drive (front) sprocket shaft and is then transferred via a small outer sprocket which is fixed to the final drive up to the top sprocket which is attached to the transfer case. Are you still with me?

The transfer case is attached to the AWD main gearbox which runs the drive shaft through the clutch assembly up to the headstock. The headstock houses more gears which drive the chains and sprockets attached to the triple clamps through the outer linear drive shafts down to the fork drop outs with a pinion gear at the end of the shafts. The drop outs house bevel gears which then engage through into the special front hub to activate the drive when required.

That is a pretty simple explanation to the operation of the system – it does not need to be overly complicated. The Christini runs through a series of drives made from the strongest and lightest materials available to produce a system which has the ability to kick in when the rider needs it most. The test bike is set at 60 per cent front wheel drive which means as soon as the rear wheel loses traction the system takes over and brings the front wheel smoothly driving into action. The bike is basically a normal dirt scooter for 90 per cent of the time but with the ability to help its rider out when the going gets tough.

The hours taken to perfect the system have been immense so it was time to test the weapon with some tough action...



HOW IT RIDES >>

The first test venue for the initial shakedown with the bike was the DBR/XXX Demolition Endurocross track in sunny Dorset. The track is quite technical and physically demanding with some hard hits and low grip as well as tight turns, sandy going, tyres, rocks and metal tanks. This is a good test for the Christini as I wanted to get a little time to get used to the feel of the AWD before the 'real' test began at The Tough One!

The bike was pretty easy to get a feel for straight away as I ride a 300 EXC most of the time. I initially rode the bike with the system 'off' to get used to the extra weight of the bike over a standard model. The extra weight is evident but it gives the front end a settled feel and the forks worked great for an '08 model fork. After a couple of laps the bike felt good and I engaged the AWD system with the pull of the lever. Just like that we were in AWD!

I was really surprised at the lack of difference with the system engaged. Cornering was still smooth and as long as the throttle wasn't pinned too hard mid-corner the bike behaved exactly like a normal ride. The difference comes on slightly lower grip areas of technical going. Over the big dumper tyres I noticed a significant difference in speed as the front wheel would kick in and 'suck' the bike over the obstacle. It was like an invisible force pulling the bike over and almost 'through' this part of the track.

It's quite a strange feeling to start with but it's a feeling I liked – a lot! I found the extra weight would tire my shoulders a little faster than on the standard bike but the track is super intense and there is absolutely no rest. So on endurocross style going the Christini was rocking.

The next venue for a quick ride was at Gas Gas UK HQ for a short spot of filming with Sully, Jeff 'Throttle' Pakosta and Wayne Braybrook. The KTM part of the Christini bike wasn't enjoying the lack of temperature on the day and took a long time to dry out but it was a great place to test the bike over some slippery rocks. I didn't ride for long on the day but the feeling for the bike was getting a little better and each pass through the rocks went smoother. The 60 per cent drive set-up to the front wheel worked perfectly as it's not too aggressive when it starts to drive.

The transfer from normal drive to all-wheel-drive was smooth every time I called on it to help me out of a tight spot and it would oblige by happily pulling me out of the sh*t. Excellent! After a few suggestions from the Sutt we decided to try to run the bike through the long rock section flat-out and it was pretty amazing how the bike forced me to keep on truckin'. It loved to be pushed on through and reacted well with a great amount of stability as long as I stayed strong on the bars. So big rocks style going – no problem!

The biggest test for the Christini and Team DBR was The Tough One extreme enduro and as you may have read last month I had a small issue with a damaged fuel tank due to Italian idiots being in the general area of the bike at some time (I have since fitted a sweet new tank to the bike and all is well with the world!)

The race was an excellent test for the bike with the varied terrain. So with a mindset of take things smooth and steady to feel what the bike was doing and enjoy the race experience it was off into the depths of the Nantmawr Quarry. The flowing parts of the track strangely took the longest to get the bike figured out on. The balance was there with the bike from front to back but I don't think I was attacking the fast muddy >>



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bike test

As soon as the rear wheel breaks traction the AWD system kicks in so weight slightly forward on climbs is the best technique – eh Geoff?



sections with enough aggression – I reckon the bike reacts well to being trail ridden real steady and also to being hammered hard. It seems the middle ground makes for a strange sensation in the slickest of mud and grass conditions.

I had to tell myself to pick up the pace at times in these parts of the course as A) I was losing lots of time and B) I was not pushing the bike to work at its best. This was the only negative of the whole test experience with the Christini AWD and that's pretty much only due to my lack of time on the bike before the event to get comfortable with it at higher speeds. The technical climbs and rocky sections of the track made for great test areas for the AWD and it was cool to play around with it and learn more about its strengths during the race.

With a small flick of the clutch in certain situations I was able to control the front wheel's power delivery

to find traction in some near impossible situations. I had a blast on the toughest parts of the course and I ended up looking forward to getting to the worst parts to re-test the bike's capabilities. Positioning my weight towards the front while going up every climb was the key to success and this took some thinking and shoulder power at times. The bike requires you to know a little of how it works and from that point you can play with it and get yourself into the style of riding required to get the best from it in all terrains. This comes with time and T1 gave me some more time to make this a true test of the machine at the highest level of international competition.

So did the Christini AWD pass the test? With flying colours!

For more information and pricing go to www.christini.com



BLAST OFF!

LIKE A SPICY BEAN CASSEROLE SAT FESTERING IN THE EDITOR'S COLON, THE FIM MOTOCROSS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS ARE READY TO RIP...

Words and photos by **Sutty**

In just a few weeks time the opening round of the 2009 motocross world championships will fire from the line in Faenza and there's not a thing you can do to stop it! It's all change for GP motocross in 2009 with the qualification system gone and riders having to pay a whopping 10,000 Euro fee to Youthstream to guarantee their entry onto the startline in either the MX1 or MX2 class for the year. But despite this crazy system that makes the fastest 80 (40 in each class) riders on this planet pay to display their talent the 2009 world championships are shaping up to be the most exciting they've ever been!

In theory there are no fewer than 12 potential moto winners in the MX1 series which should make the 2009 championship an absolute classic of epic proportion. Nine riders won a GP moto or more in 2008 and a couple more came close but at the end of the year only one man could be crowned champion – Monster Yamaha's David Philippaerts.

Philippaerts obviously heads into this year's series as one of the favourites to win again but he's gonna have his hands full. Spanish Silver Action KTM star Jon Barragan won twice as many MX1 GPs as any other rider last year with four so you can guarantee he'll be up for it too as will GPKR Kawasaki's Seb Pourcel and Martin Honda's Marc De Reuver who also won two apiece – the same number as the eventual champ Philippaerts. Other winners in 2008 were Teka Suzuki's Steve Ramon and Ken De Dycker who finished second and third in the final series standings, DP's team-mate Josh Coppins, factory KTM's Max Nagl and Kawasaki Racing Team's Tanel Leok who all won one each – you can definitely expect all of those riders to be near the front in 2009. >>

Frenchman Nico Aubin is a genuine contender in the hotly-contested MX2 class





Clement Desalle – aka MX Panda aka #25 – is looking to make 2009 his breakthrough season

RACES IN PLACES...

THE BATTLEFIELDS FOR THIS YEAR'S ALL-OUT WAR >>

Round 1 – Faenza, Italy – March 28/29

The venue for 2008's final GP is the season opener this year and the fast, hardpack hillsides of the Faenza circuit offer up some of the best racing in the MXGP season as the circuit favours the fearless but only if they're technically proficient too! Situated around 50km south east of Bologna and only a stone's throw from the Imola F1 circuit, Faenza is one of the easier races to visit if you fancy a fly/drive trip to the opening GP of the season – just watch out for pesky speed cameras!

Round 2 – Sevlievo, Bulgaria – April 4/5

The Bulgarians claim that Sevlievo is the world's best motocross circuit and they're not far wrong! Big jumps, massive climbs and long fast descents make Sevlievo one of the more viewer-friendly circuits on the GP calendar although the atmosphere is sometimes lacking as the Bulgarian crowd is normally quite sparse. If you fancy visiting one of the world's most up to date motocross facilities in a reet proper old-school eastern European setting then Sevlievo is worth the trip and this year also hosts the first round of the women's world championship too!

Round 3 – Istanbul, Turkey – April 11/12

A new race on the calendar for 2009, not a lot is known about the Turkish GP although judging by the images and track map that can be found on the race's official website – www.mx1istanbul.com – it should be a good one. One of the more modern types of venue, the

Hezarfen civil airport and hobby centre already has a great infrastructure and facilities so let's hope the track is just as good as the car park!

Round 4 – Valkenswaard, Netherlands – April 25/26

Valkenswaard is a bit of a rarity on the GP calendar as it's a typically deep Dutch sand track that atypically features an elevation change or two – albeit man-made ones! Situated just south of Eindhoven in the North Brabant area of Holland, the Valkenswaard circuit is in the epicentre of the motocross community with the legendary GP tracks of Lommel and Lierop just a stone's throw away. Due to its geographical location Valkenswaard is always a popular race with fans who come in their thousands to see the world's fastest off-road racers battle it out in the infamous black sand of the Eurocircuit facility. Getting there is easy with the closest airport being Eindhoven – Ryanair and VLM Airlines both fly there from the UK. It's also well worth looking at flying into Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport and hiring a car or even driving across from the UK like Swordy does – last year he was home and tucking in Jodie on Sunday evening before midnight!

Round 5 – Agueda, Portugal – May 9/10

The Portuguese round of the series seems to be popular with British fans who annually flock to the Agueda circuit that's famous for its big jumps, elevation changes and bright red sandy soil. Overall viewing is good and the amphitheatre setting creates a great

atmosphere with the fans – many of whom camp out in the adjacent woods. Agueda is not a million miles from either the Porto or Lisbon airports and is close to the beautiful Atlantic coast too which makes the Portuguese round an excellent excuse for a spring break!

Round 6 – Bellpuig, Spain – May 16/17

Perhaps not quite as exciting as Talavera was, the new home of the Spanish GP is an excellently prepared and exciting circuit that offers good facilities, great racing and decent viewing. Set in the north east of the country in the Catalan region of Spain this fast hillside circuit is easy to reach from both the Girona and Barcelona airports.

Round 7 – Mallory Park, Great Britain – May 30/31

There's absolutely no reason not to be at Mallory Park for this year's British GP as not only do you get MX1, MX2 and Veteran GP action for the price of admission but a round of the Supermoto series too! Purpose built for the '08 GP the Mallory circuit is one of the better man-made racetracks on the calendar offering a plethora of line choices and full of mud, ruts, bumps, elevation changes and jumps – proper motocross stuff! Mallory Park is based slap bang in the middle of the country not far from Leicester and the M1, M6 and M69 motorways. Be there or be square!

Round 8 – Ernee, France – June 6/7

Around 80 miles south east from the ferry port of



It will also be worth keeping an eye on Kevin Stribos who missed most of 2008 due to injury. Stribos was runner-up in the MX1 championship in 2006 and '07 and looks to be back at full form if his pre-season results are anything to go by. Also looking hot in the warm-up races is fellow Belgian ace Clement Desalle who, like Stribos, lines up on a Honda for the first time in his professional career – expect fireworks from the man they call the MX Panda!

And let's not forget Billy MacKenzie who was one of the fastest riders out on the track in '08 and gave British fans something to shout about at every round as he proved brutally efficient with only arm-pump and concentration lapses keeping the Scotsman off the podium. After a winter spent training like a madman, MacKenzie's fitter than ever and with the CAS team using full factory machines rather than kitted bikes like they have in the past this could be the year that Billy gets to show us just how good he is – let's keep everything crossed for him!

Other Brits racing full-time in MX1 are KTM UK's Alex Snow, James Noble who's mounted on an MVR-D Suzuki for the first time in his lengthy career and the CCM boys – Tom Church and Jason Dougan – who both looked good at Hawkstone in the pre-season international. Expect Ray Rowson to return to the fold with CCM too sometime during the summer as he recovers from a nasty knee injury.

But perhaps the biggest buzz surrounding the '09 MX1 series is the arrival of Antonio Cairoli to the 450 class. A previous MX1 GP winner and two-time MX2 world champion, Cairoli is probably the only man capable of adding even more excitement to the world championships as the scintillatingly smooth Sicilian does everything with style and panache! Armed with a very potent De Carli-tuned Yamaha only a fool would bet against him winning a GP or two but can he do enough to take the title in his rookie year?

Of all the riders who won an MX2 GP in 2008 only one – Italian Yamaha rider Davide Guarneri – returns to the class in 2009! This leaves the championship pretty much wide open with the only guarantee being that a brand-new MX2 champion will be crowned this year! >>



Antonio Cairoli's move to MX1 makes him the wild card of the class

St Malo, Ernee is a classic French-style motocross circuit – we're talking flat-out fast, fence-lined and perched on the side of a monstrous hill. As home of the 2005 Motocross des Nations that attracted more than 30,000 paying fans, the Ernee circuit is obviously already a popular one with spectators and there's no reason why they won't be back in record numbers for 2009!

Round 9 – Teutschenthal, Germany – June 20/21
Teutschenthal is one of the finer circuits for spectators in GP motocross as this tight, hardpack circuit is packed full of elevation changes and jumps! Situated in the east of the country the facility still has an old communist charm to it and is infamous for its monster beer tent and Saturday night party that one year kept Joel Smets awake until he pulled the plug on the generator! If you're a fan of great motocross, beer and sausage then this is one not to miss! Fly in to Leipzig Airport then head west to Halle – Teutschenthal is just a midge's further!

Round 10 – Kegums, Latvia – June 27/28
Kegums is in the Ogre district of Latvia and has been a regular stop on the sidecarcross world championship circuit for some years. The sandy circuit is only 60kms from Riga Airport which is somewhere that Easyjet fly to from the UK making it a potentially cheap as chips overseas GP to visit if you book your flights early enough.

Round 11 – Uddevalla, Sweden – July 4/5

Uddevalla is a track that's famous for the rock face that overlooks the entire circuit which is where most of the Scandinavian race fans perch themselves for the entire weekend! Quite slick and one-lined in places, the Swedish circuit actually provides plenty of good racing as passes take some planning and mistakes are easily made meaning riders swap positions almost continuously through the pack. As one of only two GPs held north of Mallory – Kegums is the other – Uddevalla is always packed out with northern European race fans and has a great party vibe!

Round 12 – Lommel, Belgium – August 1/2

Not exactly the prettiest of places, the circuit is situated on the filthy backside of Lommel's industrial area. As a full-time practice facility the circuit is ever changing although one thing will always stay the same – the mega deep sand surface the track is sat on! Probably the most physically demanding circuit in the world, Lommel is situated just to the south east of Eindhoven – no more than 10 miles from Valkenswaard – in an area that's quite literally saturated with GP motocross tracks. This makes for a great climax to a week-long riding holiday...

Round 13 – Loket, Czech Republic – August 8/9

Loket is one of the coolest venues on the GP calendar and has a real old-school vibe to it. Not a favourite among the racers – mostly due to the high speeds and

gravely track surface – the Loket circuit still produces plenty of good bar-to-bar racing and some very aggressive passing. Loket is around 90 miles from the country's capital of Prague and situated close to the spa town of Karlovy Vary that is well worth a visit itself as it is recognisable from films such as the great Casino Royale and not so great Hostel 2!

Round 14 – Lierop, the Netherlands – August 29/30

It's strange that the circuit with the most simple of layouts in the entire series actually provides some of the best racing. Lierop is a classic Dutch sand circuit. Tree-lined and as flat as a pancake but with its long whoop-filled straights, mile-long ruts and bottomless berms it's easy to make up – or lose – a lot of time which is why it quite often throws up a surprise result or two. Situated just east of Eindhoven and north east of Valkenswaard, it's another reet easy European race to visit.

Round 15 – Camelinha, Brazil – September 12/13

It's been a fair few years since Brazil hosted a motocross GP and on its return visit to the calendar the country that's probably best known for producing footballers and cage fighters gets the jewel in the crown – the 15th and final round! It's a real shame that both world titles could be decided so far overseas although the Camelinha circuit is a good 'un to tie up the series with and like all the other rounds can be seen live and free online at www.freecaster.tv



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CHAMP'S CHAT!

CHECKING IN WITH THE REIGNING
MX1 WORLD CHAMPION...

Words by Adam Wheeler

David Philippaerts won two MX1 grands prix out of 15 in 2008 to take the world championship in only his second season of racing in the class and his first with the factory Yamaha team. The 25-year-old Italian from Borgosesia did however register 13 top three finishes from 30 motos and only dropped out of the top five on eight occasions proving consistency is the key to success. We caught up with David just prior to the GP season kicking off to find out what's going on in the champ's mind...

DBR: How do you feel about the season ahead? Does the status of number one give you extra confidence?

DP: "Actually I feel nervous. I know that the others will be looking at me more and will be pushing extra hard to be faster – I don't think I have really been in this kind of position before. Maybe they think that it is easy to win the title now that I have done it but I know how difficult it is to be up there all season long."

DBR: Faenza for round one will be an emotional grand prix...

DP: "Yes, I really cannot believe how quickly the winter has gone. It felt like we were working so hard up until that point and winning the title in 2008 and now suddenly we will be back at Faenza for a new adventure. I think quite a few fans will be there this time! It won't be easy and I will definitely be keeping in my mind that there are 14 more races after that one."

DBR: How do you feel physically going into 2009?

DP: "Pretty good. I would say the same as last year but I have the feeling it will be easier for me to go harder for the full 40 minutes. I kept more or less the same training programme. I spent almost a month in the mountains in northern Italy through December. It reached temperatures of minus 12 up there and I was doing gym work in the morning with my brother and then we would do cross-country skiing in the afternoons. I really like the high altitude stuff. In January I then went for three weeks to the island of Sardinia and did nothing but ride the bike every day."

DBR: So it won't be a problem doing another half moto on Saturdays to determine gate pick for the new GP qualification system?

DP: "No and to be honest I would prefer to have a race. Okay, things can wrong at the first corner or the bike might have a problem and these are issues you don't have to worry about during a timed session but it is also more interesting for both riders and spectators. For us it gives a small preview for what might happen on Sunday. I think I can speak for most when we say that we would prefer to race to qualify."

DBR: Has life changed much as world champion?

DP: "Not a great deal. I get a few more people shouting at me in the street and the recognition is always nice and makes me happy. I was able to buy myself a Mercedes Viano with some trick parts and also get my house finished. I suppose more people will want my time and opinions but this is part of being a world champion and even sometimes if you say you don't want the extra hassle or work, deep down you don't mind it."

>>

Billy Mac blows hot and cold – there's no doubting his race-winning speed but he needs to stay rubber side down more often to be in contention



Steve Ramon won the '07 MX1 crown by being consistent – you can virtually guarantee more of the same this season

The Red Bull KTM teamsters have come out with all guns blazing and super Scot Shaun Simpson and Rui Goncalves both look super-strong on their factory bikes so far. KTM UK's Stephen Sword will be looking to put some pre-season sniffles behind him as he enters what will be his last chance to take an MX2 world championship before it becomes a class purely for under 23s in 2010 and beyond.

European champ Valentin Teillet also seems to be on it and you shouldn't count out Joel Roelants and Jeremy Van Horebeek who constantly showed improvement throughout 2008.

KTM's biggest challenge for supremacy will undoubtedly come from the blue corner of Yamaha. Frenchman Nico Aubin and American teen idol Zach Osborne both won motos in 2008 and both are back in '09 hungry for victory. For Osborne this will be his first full season in the GPs but with the guidance of UTAG team manager Steve Dixon – who enters his 20th GP season in '09 so knows what it's all about – should be on it from the off. Zach already looks super-sharp and the UTAG team have been working hard all winter to give Osborne the machinery he needs to take the title!

Osborne's young UTAG team-mate Mel Pocock is back on the GP trail in '09 and will definitely be looking forward to concentrating on the points-paying motos rather than getting hung up in the qualification process. Still only 16, expect Mel to come on leaps and bounds as his apprenticeship with the UTAG team progresses. Points are a possibility as this youngster is certainly no quitter.

KTM UK's Jake Nicholls on the other hand should be looking to squeeze into the top 10 this year if he can stay injury free. The Reverend has shown some great early season speed on his new steed and after scoring good points in the latter half of last year is getting increasingly potent on the world scene. Also worth keeping an eye on in the MX2 class will be MVR-D's Matiss Karro who is already a world champ in the youth ranks. Seemingly fitting right in with the Chamberlain team, Matiss could well pull a moto win or two out of the bag in '09 if things go his way.



David and Tony Cairoli are good friends – and in 2009 they will be rivals again

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DBR: Why no number one on the bike?

DP: "Because #19 is better! I think the fans remember the rider not by the face but by their number. I can honestly say that I won't miss not having a number one on the bike – after all, I won the title last year, not this one."

DBR: Last year some people accused you of being too aggressive and even careless. Will you change this approach for 2009?

DP: "No, I will be even more aggressive. People spoke a lot of s**t about me in 2008 – maybe I was an easy target because I was leading. I watched the races again on TV and I think there were other riders who seemed more aggressive than I was. This season I want to push more."

DBR: How do you get on with your rivals?

DP: "If the person is a good guy then normally he is a friend. People like Ramon and Pourcel I get along fine with. Someone who likes to talk a lot – like De Reuver – is nothing to me."

DBR: Do you like to play mind games with them?

DP: "No, outside of the track I like to be liked. However, in the race if they think I can be crazy or harder then this necessarily is not a bad thing!"

DBR: Steve Ramon, Josh Coppins and Ken De Dycker stuck the closest to you in 2008. Do you think the same faces will be there in 2009?

DP: "Yes but there will be more. Kevin Strijbos will be in contention and Barragan also will be pushing for wins. It will be hard but exciting. I have been impressed also by Desalle."

DBR: Let's talk for a minute about your friend Antonio Cairoli. He is coming into MX1 for the first time since winning his debut wild card outing in 2007. How do you rate his chances?

DP: "I don't think you have to be smart to believe that he will be strong. At Montevarchi for the first round of the Italian championship recently his race time was very good. Tony made the right preparation by winning the 2008 MX1 Italian championship and getting used to the bike. I'm not sure if he can go for the title. It is very hard to say, I think everything is possible – 10 different riders won in 2008."

DBR: But only three were going for the championship...

DP: "Yes but not many people would have bet on me winning the title at the start of the year would they? It is the first year for Tony in MX1 but that should not be a reason for people to count him out. Personally I think you need a year to learn the rhythm of the MX1 class but Tony has already been doing a lot of riding and racing with the 450."

DBR: What about the economic situation – how do you think it will affect the sport?

DP: "For sure it will alter the world championship as we know it. The series has been growing so much that I hope we do not see too many changes. I think the riders all know at the back of their minds that good contracts will be harder to come by. I believe almost every factory rider is out of contract this season so there will be a lot of things up in the air. It is now expensive to race and travel. I fear a little bit for the state of things in 2010. There is already a lot for the teams to pay."

Shaun Simpson starts as Britain's
best bet for a world crown in '09



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Neville Bradshaw looks solid at Hawkstone Park



PASSION STATEMENT!

WITH NEVILLE BRADSHAW AS THEIR SOLE RIDER, DB RACING BURST ONTO THE SCENE IN 2008 WITH SOME PRETTY STELLAR RESULTS – AND NOW THEY'RE LOOKING TO BUILD ON THIS SUCCESS...

Words and photos by Mark Turner

David Bright and Vicki Jeffreys keep the team rolling





Kiwi Michael Phillips is new to the team in '09



© Surtty



Top level motocross takes big financial commitment – a fact that becomes crystal clear just walking through the paddock and checking out the big teams' snazzy set-ups with their awnings, hospitality areas and sometimes even a few bikes!

Smaller teams make up a large percentage of the paddock and these, unsurprisingly, tend to go unnoticed but without them the startgate would look pretty empty. One such team is Peterborough-based DB Racing run under the watchful eyes of David Bright and Vicki Jeffreys.

Set up in late 2007 and originally employing the services of Neville Bradshaw, the team's first full season was a stellar one with a British Masters title and fourth overall in the Maxxis MX2 championship. On top of this Nev also scored points at the British GP and represented South Africa at the MXdN. Not bad going for a privateer team...

So with 2008 firmly establishing DB Racing as a major contender, we hooked up with team owner David, engine and suspension tuner Matt Hutchins and – naturally – 2009 riders Nev and new signing Michael Phillips to get an idea of life among the privateers...

DBR: How did you feel going into round one at Donington last year and what were your goals for the 2008 season?

DB: "Very nervous at the beginning! We were in with a lot of big teams – Swift, Molson and CAS – and I wanted to put on a good show for the sponsors. A top five finish [in the series] would have been fantastic – we finished seventh at the first round so I knew we were in the ballpark. We set up our stall from there."

DBR: Is DB Racing mostly self-funded and how big a part do outside sponsors play?

DB: "In 2008 we had no outside sponsors – financially it was funded by myself. We had support from Honda with bikes which was very much appreciated and Pirelli, Pro-Clean, Pulse and LR Graphics supplied products, otherwise it was all down to me."

DBR: How much does it cost to go racing?

DB: "About £125,000 which is a lot of money but we had to step it up for Neville. It's just a phenomenal amount of money that goes through your hands. Take the awning for the truck – it's going to cost between £5-6000. I know it's going to last but it's money that still needs to be spent as an initial outlay."

DBR: Do you have your own workshop facilities?

DB: "Yes, based at home. Just like an old school team we all muck in at night to get the job done!"

DBR: What was the highlight of 2008?

DB: "Without a doubt Brampton [where Neville finished third overall at the Maxxis round]. The podium for Neville makes people know you are there – there are so many teams about but the minute you step onto that podium they start taking note! It had a great effect on everyone – the team and the rider."

"Don't get me wrong, the MXdN was great but Brampton will always stand above the rest. Also Mallory, our first GP. To turn up and for Nev to score points against the best riders in the world was for us another great achievement."

DBR: For this season you've got Michael Phillips as well...

DB: "We spoke to a number of riders last year and with Neville being in my books a top three rider I needed another rider to ride alongside him. We knew Mike and kept in touch with his progress in New Zealand and we signed him for the 2009 season. It was always my aim to run a two-man team."

DBR: This is a long-term deal for you?

DB: "For sure. I've always been loyal to Honda from my very first bike and want to carry that on. The British championship will be our main priority. We want to get into Europe a bit this year to help pick our speed up. I really feel Neville has a good prospect of winning the Maxxis British championship and we have the package to do this."

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HOT TUNER!

MATT HUTCHINS >>>

Engine and suspension specialist Matt Hutchins has worked as mechanic to Neville in his '04 and '05 campaigns and to Jussi Vehvilainen in 2006. Matt now runs his own tuning business – Evo-Tech – but will be found under the DB Racing awning on race day.

DBR: Can you give us an insight into the work you do to DB Racing's race bikes.

MH: "Nev runs a factory A kit while Mike will run with a modified Showa unit. With the engines I modify the cylinderhead and valve seats and redesign the combustion chamber. The ignition is reprogrammed and the compression raised and the clutch and carb are uprated and modified. The bottom end stays pretty much untouched – just checked on a regular basis – and with these changes I feel we have a good package to do very well at this level."

DBR: What sort of cost are you talking to get the bikes ready for racing at this level?

MH: "Around £12-13000, including the price of the bike."

In the team's first year they got to field Bradshaw in the MXdN

© Surty

Phillips' '08 season ended early through injury

© Surty



THE RIDERS

NEVILLE AND MIKE >>>

Neville Bradshaw, DB Racing's sole rider in 2008, needs no introduction to British motocross fans after stints with Motovision Suzuki and PAR Honda...

DBR: How did the deal with David come about?

NB: "At the end of '07 I was looking for something as the season hadn't gone well. I got talking to Andy Lee at Elsworth who said David was interested for 2008 so we sat down, had a meeting and everything looked good, we got backing from Honda and prepared for 2008."

DBR: How does riding for David compare to riding for the larger teams you've been with in the past?

NB: "I really enjoy the team atmosphere, like I'm not bigger than the team and the team's not bigger than me. There's no pressure as such but with a lot more sponsors coming on board this year the pressure's upped a little."

"Last year I was the #1 rider and anything I needed I got and David was brilliant in that respect – he let me choose the suspension, tyres and engines I wanted to use and everything just progressed through the season. I hope to carry on this progression through this year."

Kiwi Michael Phillips is the new boy on the team but he's not new to the UK after his ill-fated debut season in the Maxxis in 2008 which ended prematurely...

DBR: What happened in '08?

MP: "I came over to the UK last year and rode for the Nigel Arnold KTM team in the British championships. Things were going really well until I broke my arm quite badly at Foxhill and from that point I knew my season was over so I headed back home – basically started again, got fit and started back on the Hondas."

DBR: And who did this year's ride with DB Racing come about?

MP: "I knew Nev from last year and I was looking for a team with a bit more stability, got talking with David and Vicki and we struck a deal late in 2008."

DBR: So with everything in place 2009 is looking promising...

MP: "For sure, I'm feeling really fit and strong, the bikes are great and apart from the wet weather the tracks here are not that much different to the ones back home so, yeah, I'm really looking forward to this year."

CHEERS M'DEARS!

THANKS TO...

In order to go racing in 2009 DB Racing would like to thank Honda, Pirelli, Pulse Racing Products, Putoline Oils, Troy Lee Designs, Alpinestars, Samco, Justin Hale of JH Engineering, Evo-Tech, Twin Air, Akrapovic, LR Designs (graphics), Talon, UFO, Evoke Concepts, Pro-Clean and Fro Systems.

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THE WAITING GAME!

GOOD THINGS APPARENTLY COME TO THOSE WHO WAIT AND EXCESSIVE WEIGHT IS SOMETHING OUR FULL-FIGURED DEPUTY DAWGER KNOWS ALL ABOUT...

Words and photo by **Sutty**

Sometimes to get what you want in life you have to play the waiting game. It might not work well with the missus – what does? – but in the dirt bike restoration game patiently holding on to your pennies to wait for that all-important must-have part sometimes pays dividends.

It's no secret that I've been wanting to lay my hands on a HRC-style Honda Racing ignition cover for the Shed of Dread because in my mind they are as trick as owl! Although they were only made by Dutch parts wizards TMV for a few years before Honda's corporate lawyers got the operation shut down, these sexy stator covers actually aren't all that rare but tracking one down for the SoD had been proving somewhat difficult.

Then out of the blue came an email from our Canadian Radio America contributor Steve Matthes who dragged himself away from watching reruns of Degrassi Junior High and eating Kroff dinner to type out this message...

'I read that bit about those TMV covers in the magazine and I actually had those very clutch and ignition covers on my '92 CR250. I kept them all these years [sweet] because they were cool and trick looking but then I met this guy in Ohio [uh oh] who built this Stanton replica – and I mean replica because this thing was so sweet – anyway he didn't have these covers so I gave both to him [you b@stard] and he s**t his pants! It was nice to see a guy appreciate them [like I care anymore] instead of me having them in my garage collecting dust!'

That was the kind of near miss I'd been experiencing a lot of while trying to track down THE cover of my dreams – Terry Rudd Motorcycles had 'sold their last 250 one last week' when I contacted them but did 'still have them in for 500s and 125s if you know anyone who's looking'...

Just as I was about to give up and go ahead and bite the bullet to buy a billet Service Honda item – not too dissimilar but not really what I was after – I got an email from a guy called Mark Slade that genuinely saved my life. For those that don't know him Mark is a life-long motocross fan who just happens to have his own mail order business – MS Racing down in Somerset which can be found online at www.ms racing.co.uk

To be fair I've known of Mark for years and I actually remember him from back in the days when the SoD was just a twinkle in some Japanese engineer's eye as he was a hot shoe in the South West Masters and British championship series. Even though he's knocking on a bit now Mark still races to this day and recently picked up a very respectable 394th place finish in the Le Touquet beach race. But I digress...

The point of Mark's email wasn't to discuss his recent beach race successes or indeed apologise for ramming me off the track with his Yamaha four-popper in the LCQ of the '99 Exeter Supercross which I still haven't forgotten about by the way – I'll get you Slade! – but rather to tell me that he had the very thing I was looking for. Oh yes, a TMV Honda Racing cover to fit a '96 CR250 and it was still brand-new in the packet! Within minutes we agreed a price, I paid with Paypal and before the poop in my pants had dried – I now know how 'Ohio guy' felt – received a well-wrapped package in the post! Sweet!

With that worrying little problem out of the way I could begin thinking about the rebuild again which to be fair isn't at all going to plan or anywhere near on schedule. I have however finally fitted the triple clamps again after replacing the headstock bearings with an All Balls revamp kit from Apico. The kit includes both bearings and seals for the top and bottom and fitting wasn't difficult – or it wouldn't have been if I had the right tools for the job.

Speaking of tools, I re-learned one of the basics the other week – never lend anybody anything! After kindly allowing Wakker to borrow my tyre levers months ago the eejit has lost them which meant I had to cut my tyre off with a handsaw before sending my hoops to the Central Wheel Company in Birmingham who are very kindly going to revamp them! More about that next month...

Luckily, I'm in no rush to fit my wheels as my suspension units are still in the workshop at RG3 and the SoD's powerplant is in my kitchen cum workshop awaiting a new piston. I had originally decided to leave the engine innards alone but feeling bored one evening I decided to have a look inside the top-end. There's nothing interesting to report inside and a new piston, ring, top-end bearing and all the applicable gaskets will be replaced, the power valve cleaned and all put back together before the motor slips back inside the frame.

From there everything should be pretty simple except for the fitment of some Fro Systems footpegs from a later model which I'm going to have to make some spacers for. I don't foresee there being a problem with those although you never actually know with these things until you offer them up to fit.

I also now have new plastics for the SoD courtesy of the lovely Demon Tweaks – www.demon-tweaks.co.uk. They're about to be sent to MXM in Newcastle where Frank Thornton – the head of the UK's original graphics producer – is gonna design and fit some Bobby Dazzler decals and a new seat cover for me. Nice one Frank, much appreciated! |

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a metallic, circular object, likely a motorcycle headlight or fairing. The surface has a fine, pebbled texture. The words "HONDA" and "RACING" are embossed in a bold, sans-serif font. "HONDA" is on the top line, and "RACING" is on the line below it. The lighting is dramatic, coming from the upper left, which creates strong highlights on the raised letters and deep shadows on the surrounding surface and in the background. The background is entirely black.

HONDA
RACING



QUESTION TIME!

WALKER ANSWERS YOUR TECHNICAL TEASERS...

Words by **Geoff Walker** Photos by **JP O'Connell**

INTHEMIX

Could you help me? My son pestered me to get him a motocross bike and I finally gave in and bought a 2008 KTM 85 with big wheels. The bike is running with a standard exhaust and the man I bought it from said he had re-jetted the bike with a richer main jet. I don't really know what this means but the problem is the bike is kicking out a bit of oil from the rear pipe. I am mixing the petrol at 125ml of oil to five litres of fuel which I presume to be correct.

Phil, via email

I have worked with some KTM 85s for the last couple of years and I have found that as with most of the range of two-stroke KTMs they like to be run with 100cc of quality two-stroke oil for every five litres of quality unleaded. This is obviously less than you are mixing but the Austrian brand like it that way and on mainland Europe they run them with 80cc of oil for every five litres of fuel.

I personally run the long-term KTM 300 EXC on ELF HTX 976 fully synthetic two-stroke oil at 100cc per five litres (50:1 ratio) and the bike loves it like a fat kid

loves ze cake! I carry a small 100cc single dose plastic bottle around in my bum bag so I get the measurement correct every time.

DEPJET

I've just bought a complete DEP pipe for my '07 YZ125. Could you recommend a jetting set-up for the bike for this time of year? I want to get the best from the bike with the pipe fitted. Also, my friend has an '07 RM125 and he would like to know the best set-up for his bike with the DEP system?

Rich, Oxford

I've just made a call to my EX mate Craig at DEP World HQ and he has the settings for the changes for both bikes.

The main jet requires an increase on both bikes so for your YZ you are recommended to go up to a 490 main jet and on the yellow peril your pal is recommended to go up to a 390 main jet. These are recommended settings using 125ml of quality two-stroke oil for every five litres of fuel while running a B8EG NGK plug or similar.

OILBURNER?

I am the proud owner of a 2007 KTM 250 EXC. It is the last of the old shape models. The bike has done about 40 hours and I am just wondering if it's using a lot of engine oil as it's only showing up at halfway on the sight glass after I have changed the oil to the specified amount and ran it for an hour.

Nick, Rochdale

It sounds like your bike is absolutely fine. I ran one of these bikes for well over 100 hours without a problem. I cannot recommend you do that without the servicing, piston changes etc but the engine on that model is pretty bulletproof as long as you keep it breathing clean air and pumping clean 10/50wt quality oil through clean oil filters.

The oil level should be from mid-window to three-quarters covered so with some settling you will be sorted. If the bike is blowing a lot of blue smoke after initial warm-up your rings have worn but this will only be due to crap entering the motor rather than normal part wear. Replace the piston and rings and keep on truckin'.

WIN!WIN!WIN!

ISO2 SWAG UP FOR GRABS >>>

Got a prep problem? Is your stoker sickly? Your four-banger bust? Or are you simply a short-arse struggling to secure your steed on its stand? Well help is at hand in the form of our tip-top tech and his top tech tips!

Email Geoff with your technical teasers at geoffwalkerdb@aoi.com Each month Geoff will answer a selection of readers' letters and each month our favourite will win an awesome ISO2 Nutrition products package – worth over £60 – plus a drinks bottle and drinks mixer. Check out the full range of ISO2 Nutrition products at www.iso2nutrition.co.uk



SUZIWOES!

Suzi woes is not the name of my girlfriend but they are giving me sleepless nights at the moment. I am the disgruntled owner of a 1996 RM250, recently purchased as a cheap way for me to start into the glamorous life of a motocross dude.

It originally fired up okay but after 10-15 minutes she suddenly stopped. After a few checks I discovered I had no spark so I put in a new NGK B8EG thinking I was great and away she went for another short while before the same happened again. Another of NGK's finest was put to the test and you guessed it – same again!

I don't wish to become a director with the NGK company but at this rate it's looking like I'm becoming a major shareholder. What's the root of my problems Geoff?

Mark, via email

There could be many wonderful causes of your problem with the wee beastly but a couple of good areas to start with are the cleaning of the carb, the air filter, the mixing of the fuel, the reed petals, the stator and finally the crank seal on the motor side.

Make sure the carb is clean and the stock jetting is in place – in fact, maybe just make sure there are some jets in there for a kick off! Your air filter should not have excessive oil on it. If it is heavily oiled it will not allow enough air through to mix with the fuel. Mix fuel at 125ml of quality oil to five litres of super unleaded.

Check your reed petals for damage or wear. They should be intact and sealed down on the front side. If the spark is weakening the plug will foul so the stator could be losing its power. If you are blowing some blue smoke when the bike does fire up then you are likely to have some gearbox oil making its way into the compression chamber via a leaky crank seal.

That is a bit of a list but the bike may just need some fresh as a daisy fuel followed by a good rev out! Cut the puppy loose and burn all that built up crud out of it... I hope this helps get your bike and your sleep patterns back on track!



THEEVILSHED!

I have just purchased a 1996 CR250 and it's very similar in condition to your Shed of Dread bike. You inspired me to go with a project bike but I am having some trouble doing the top-end re-build on it. Everything is seized up on the thing and I am at the end of my tether! Help!

Nathan, via email

Just sell it to Sully!

STANDUPGUY!

I know this is a bit of a lame question and I am pretty embarrassed to ask but I am new to the sport, quite short and I was wondering what's the best way to get my bike onto my paddock stand which I have just purchased?

Tony, Ipswich

Don't be embarrassed to ask what seems like something so simple. I see people most weekends struggling to get their steeds onto their stands and I'm sure there are a lot of back specialists giving out treatment to dirt bike humans around the UK who struggle to get the bike-to-stand transfer completed smoothly.

It's a simple three-step process and even Mr Lawless can pull it off... Stand to the right side of the bike and with your right hand on the bars and your left hand on the rear mudguard. Pull the front brake on. Now bend your knees a little and set your left hip into the side of the bike aiming to be a bit lower than the tail pipe. Now push forward on the front wheel while lifting and pivoting the bike onto the stand with some help from your hip/legs. Easy as that. Failing that, sell your new bobby dazzler paddock stand and get a 'kick up' lever stand!





BLUE MONDAY!

SUTTY STARTS THE WEEK DOWN IN THE DUMPS AFTER A SUNDAY SPENT BOUNCING BIKE – AND BODY – OFF LANCASHIRE ROCKS...

Words by Sutti Photos by EK



The bacon booty van strikes gold!

It's Monday morning in the office, flatulence clouds are floating freely and I feel like I've been attacked with a piece of 2x4 – ain't life grand! The reason behind today's general achy feeling is related to the fact that yesterday I loaded up the DBR Gas Gas TXT250 in the works tranny – that has a brand-new wing mirror fitted to it by the way – and headed to a Lancs County MCC trial near Benthams. Being of limited knowledge when it comes to club trials I couldn't tell you if it was a tough one or not but it sure beat the hell out of me!

With a hectic work schedule heading into what was going to be only my second trial on the Gas Gas I didn't have that much time to practice or prepare. An unsatisfactory training session one week earlier at the legendary pay and play Back Cowm quarry facility – www.cowmleisure.com – saw me bouncing back off most of the rock steps and ledges that I tried to conquer. But by spending an hour or two on the bike I did feel slightly more comfortable than I normally look while riding trials as G2F Media's Jake Miller so kindly pointed out to me last month – cheers buddy, I hear you're riding the SSDT again this year!

After my disappointing ride at Back Cowm I gave the Gasser a quick wash – with a rag in the air box this time – as well as a general lube up and check over. And that's all that was needed – the Gasser was ready to be ridden in the Lancs County trial even if I wasn't feeling so hot after a week spent burning the midnight oil in the office. There's an old saying that goes something along the lines of 'preparation prevents p**s poor performance' and it's fair to say that my own personal preparation prior to this trial consisted mostly of just pie and little else which meant I was still a pair of Rs, two As, an O, a T, a P and an N away from anything other



*Sutty gets his trials technique
- and his ass - checked out*

than total failure – what I needed at this point was ‘an parrot’ although a miracle might well have done the trick.

Untouched by god and still without feathered friend I set off to the trial at Low Gill on Sunday morning not knowing quite what to expect. As a total rookie on the trials scene I have absolutely no idea of what type of ground any particular trial will take place on when I head to it which kinda adds to the fun and excitement but doesn’t help me mentally prepare. On the drive up to Low Gill I kind of figured I’d be in for some purely moorland type trials action like I’d discovered at Firbank but I was quite surprised by what I found as there was a nice mixture of wooded gully, stream, rock and root action all to be enjoyed.

However, although it should have been an enjoyable trial I soon found that I was riding like a complete nubbin, perhaps even worse than I had on my first day out on the awesome Gas Gas trials weapon. For some reason I found myself over-using the clutch to control my speed which meant I was jerking my way through sections like a 15-year-old with a copy of Razzle! Three after three after three soon followed although I did get a little bit better in some sections only to revert back to my revving Rodney ways straight after – weird! It was confusing the heck out of me for sure and by the end of the first lap I’d had enough so I went back to the van with my tail between my legs to get a drink, top up the fuel in the bike and to sort my head out.

It half did the trick too as I started the second lap riding much smoother and therefore much more successfully. I was enjoying myself more as well even though I dropped a silly dab in section one but cleaned the next three before fecking up big time in sections five and six. I picked

up some advice mid-lap from Northern Centre regular Phil Fallows who quite rightly told me to lay off the clutch and by trying to ride with that in mind I felt like I was getting there. The rest of the lap went much better and I entered the second half of the trial with a new – but short lived – lease of life!

If you’ve ever fallen kneecap first onto a blunt object you’ll know how I felt after fiving section one on lap three. After sitting and swearing at myself for five minutes or so I had another reasonable crack at sections two, three and four before royally trashing myself in the fifth.

After losing all forward momentum on a slippery round rock I dropped backwards into the stream bed like a ton of bricks where the Gasser caught some much needed traction – the bike shot forwards while I fell backwards onto more rocks. “I’m gonna have to give you a five for that one,” quipped the observer before adding, “and I can’t give you any extra points for style!”

A five on the scorecard, a semi-trashed silencer and a bruised kidney pretty much put an end to my day as the pain from the fall and an increasingly stiffening hip overcame my desire to finish what had been until that point a very enjoyable event – thanks to everyone at the Lancs County club and especially the observers who stand out in the cold all day for very little thanks!

Unlike myself the Gas Gas TXT250 is proving to be really resilient and continues to run flawlessly with a minimal maintenance regime. So far aside from regular filter prep and gear oil changes I haven’t had to touch much with a spanner although my latest crash will mean that the end cap needs some attention – best whip out the old rivet gun eh?

Josh Grant caused a sensation when he won at Anaheim 1 for his Joe Gibbs Racing team



N O R D I N A R Y JOE!

FORMER AMERICAN FOOTBALL COACH JOE GIBBS BECAME A BIG HITTER IN NASCAR – THEN HIS TEAM SET THEIR SIGHTS ON SX AND MX...

Joe Gibbs first rose to fame as a professional football (of the American variety) coach who won Super Bowls for the Washington Redskins. Upon his retirement from football he decided to start a NASCAR team and in his team's second year they won the season-opening Daytona 500.

A few short years ago the guys from Joe Gibbs Racing began nosing around at supercross races. "I think I got my first bike when I was six or seven and we always had bikes in the house," says Coy Gibbs, son of Joe Gibbs and operator of the Joe Gibbs Racing Yamaha team. "The rule was that we weren't allowed to ride street bikes but we could ride any dirt bike we wanted. My dad rode coming out of college when it first became big in America."

In 2007 they got serious and began looking to pull the trigger on a motocross/supercross race team. They began talking to personnel – including James Stewart's championship-winning mechanic at Kawasaki, Jeremy Albrecht.

"I knew for probably a year-and-a-half that Gibbs was going to have a team because Coy and David Evans would come to the races and watch and talk about doing a team and David Evans at the time was James Stewart's agent," JGR team manager Jeremy explains. "So I knew him pretty well and we'd talk about the team but I never thought about coming to work here. Then things started changing at Kawasaki and I wasn't liking it as much as I did so I was thinking that I wanted to do something different at some point and try to find a new position, just because I had done the same thing for so long."

"So we were walking the track at Anaheim 2 and they happened to be standing there – Coy and David – and I said 'hey, are you guys still doing your team?' and they said 'yeah, we're actually here looking right now – we're hiring everyone from the team manager to the guy mopping the floors'. So on Monday I called David and asked him about the team and he got pretty excited that I was interested and we just started talking from there. I liked the vision that they saw long-term but our schedule goes so long that the only time I could fly out to North Carolina to check out the place was on Easter weekend so there was a lot of talking on the phone until I actually got to go out there and see it."

Once he saw it he talked it over with his pregnant wife and Albrecht was in. "What was good is that I didn't know this team was based out of North Carolina when I first made the call otherwise I probably wouldn't have called and they said 'everyone needs to move here – are you okay with that?' so I asked my wife and she said 'if that's what you think is the best decision for your career then I'll do it' so we went for it. The hardest thing is our family is in California but we've had a lot of visitors and the opportunity has been well worth it. I'm learning a lot every day and it's a nice place to live."

Albrecht knew for weeks that he was going to leave Stewart and go to JGR but he didn't want to interrupt James' championship season in 2007 or get James' mind off of the task at hand so he tried to keep it a secret. But it's a small industry...

"It was hard because the hardest thing for me was that I knew I was doing it pretty early but I didn't want to mess him up going for his first supercross title," Albrecht says. "We won a world title but never the AMA title and I

didn't want to screw him up so I was kind of waiting and trying not to get rumours going. That was the hardest part because everyone knows everything in this sport. I was stressing every week, not only over that but second-guessing what I was doing every week."

"One week I'm all for it and the next week I'm worried if it's really going to work. It would've been easier just to make a decision and be done with it. It was harder to drag it out, for me. The hardest part was to sit with him in his motorhome at Vegas and tell him that I was going to be moving on. I was going to wait until Sunday when the race was over but I had to tell him on Friday before the race because [Mike] Fisher [the team manager at Kawasaki] already found out and I wanted to tell James before he heard. But he took it really well. I was surprised. He was cool to me and wished me luck and we've been cool ever since, actually. I wasn't doing it to be sneaky. I would've liked to stay until the end of the year but I was trying to get this all ready to go. It's never good when you leave somewhere. There's not a good way to do it."

Joe Gibbs Racing Yamaha's first year was largely forgettable. They hired hard-working Josh Summey – who's a North Carolina native – and talented underachiever Josh Hansen. Hansen didn't even make it through the supercross series before he parted ways with the team although Summey made it through the year.

"It was tough last year," Coy Gibbs admits. "I don't get down about stuff too often but I get frustrated when I know people aren't doing what they can to be successful. It should get easier every year for the team but I know we have the right people in place and we were just missing the biggest part – the rider. Now we have that, too."

For 2009 JGR let Summey go to the Jagermeister KTM team and hired Lites star Josh Grant (the third Josh of the team's short history) and outdoor specialist Kiwi Cody Cooper. The two riders they decided on were agreed upon by most of the people at the team.

"We all talk – myself, David Evans and Coy – and we try to involve the whole team more than probably some other companies do, just to get everyone's opinion," Albrecht says. "We all make the decisions together but there are a lot of things that go into who we pick – some riders we talked to didn't want to move here so that was one of the big things for us this year. Last year it was a little hard for us to show that our programme works so if we were going to hire someone that wouldn't move here, all of the things we wanted to do would be out the window because as soon as someone slides it's over. Say a top guy came to the team but decided he wasn't going to move here, how are you going to get the other guy to move here? It's not fair. We wanted to stick to that and give it a fair shot and we believed in it and I'm glad it's finally working."

What's working is that Grant is training hard and racing harder and it paid off right away as just like with the JGR NASCAR team, the JGR SX team won its first race in its second year – Anaheim 1.

"We had three guys there and one in the show and that's upsetting," Gibbs says of his three riders Grant, Cooper and one-race team-mate Eric Sorby. "But then we get the one guy in the show and he ends up winning it and that's just amazing."

Racer X's editors at large. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently became one of

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Grant goes bar-to-bar with series leader and title favourite James Stewart

It wasn't exactly what the team was expecting with Grant but they knew the potential was there. "The thing I like about Grant is that he's aggressive and he believes in himself and it's probably the same thing that I probably didn't like about him before he rode for me," Albrecht admits. "They were things I was thinking would be bad things but they're really good things for a team. If you're a nice guy you don't necessarily do well so I'm thinking he's got enough attitude that he knows he can do it – which I like – and that might be why in the past I thought he might not be a guy I wanted to hang out with."

"But once I got to know him he was way cooler and different from what I thought. He's just kind of quiet and does his own thing and wears his hat sideways and stuff – my impression of him was different than what he was really like so I'm glad that we gave him a shot. We're hitting our goals, except we have a win that we weren't expecting."

"Last year the goal for the team overall was to get top 10 in points – and we were close – and then top five this year, then hopefully top three next year. We're doing better than we thought and after I saw Josh ride the 450 I thought this was possible but we still didn't know until we got there. When you start looking at the list it's easy to wonder where you would end up in the list of riders."

As for Cooper, he's having a tough time of it in supercross right now but the team is sticking with him to try and help him work through the issues.

"As far as Cooper, he's got skills outdoors and we're excited for that but indoors we knew it was going to be tough for him. If we can get him to ride at the races like he does when he's practising with Josh we'd be set but he gets really nervous and rides really tight. Riders are more aggressive than what he's used to. I think he'll get it, it's just going to take some time and we're willing to work with

him. He's an awesome guy who works hard and I feel bad that he's had some tough luck."

With Grant, though, they would have the top Yamaha in the series if not for some guy named James Stewart. Still, Grant is out-performing the factory Yamaha team so it's no surprise what the team's long-term goal is in the sport.

"From what I've been told we're going to be around a long time," Albrecht adds. "They knew it was going to be difficult and I think the challenge of it is what they like. Beating the factories is the fun part. Our goal some day is to take over one of the factory teams – like if Yamaha would say 'hey, why do we do this if we have them to do this for us?', that's what they're hoping. That's the goal. It might take 10 years, or five or it might never happen but that's the goal and we'll see what happens with it. If it doesn't happen we still want to be there racing."

Defending champ Chad Reed goes bananas in Indianapolis to take his first win of the series and square the points race with James Stewart

T O O C L O S E TO CALL!

IT'S TIGHTER THAN A DUCK'S DERRIERE – AND AS WE ALL KNOW THAT'S WATERTIGHT – AT THE TOP OF THE SUPERCROSS STANDINGS AS JAMES STEWART AND CHAD REED TAKE VERY DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THE TITLE RACE...





Just as in Aesop's fable 'The Tortoise and the Hare' one of the two championship rivals in the 2009 Monster Energy/AMA SX championship is taking the steady, calculated approach while the other is running away with race after race using blinding speed and perfect race strategy as he attempts to make up for a DNF in the opening round. In this fable the tortoise is Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Chad Reed while the hare is San Manuel Yamaha's James Stewart.

After stringing together four wins in a row, Stewart – along with Reed and the rest of the 450cc class – heads into Anaheim 3 for round six and is met with a muddy track, although it dries throughout the day. The track conditions are such that the valleys between the jumps are a bit wet and rutted from the days of rain prior to the race and the jumps themselves are actually really dry and hard-packed.

Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Mike Alessi gets to the first turn a few feet in front of Stewart who goes around the inside of the 180-degree bend to come out alongside Alessi. Alessi has the inside going into the next turn and holds the lead until a couple of turns later when Stewart takes the inside away from Alessi and takes over the lead. Alessi then goes down in the next turn, almost taking his team-mate

Reed and Honda Red Bull Racing's Ivan Tedesco with him. Alessi remounts last while JGR/Toyota Yamaha's Josh Grant takes over second in front of Davi Millsaps, Tedesco, GEICO Powersports Honda's Kevin Windham and Reed.

Stewart immediately begins to pull away on the slick track while Grant loses second to the charging Reed on lap eight of 20.

Stewart and Reed trade top lap times that culminate in both riders dipping into the 59-second range but Reed drops the lowest lap time of the two as he catches Stewart.

As the laps dwindle down it becomes increasingly clear that Reed is going to run out of time and he does exactly that as the rain begins to fall late in the Main. He can't get close enough to Stewart to mount a serious challenge and Stewart takes the win – his fifth in a row – with just over three seconds to spare over Reed who was as far back as 12 seconds behind Stewart earlier in the race.

"Yeah, I saw Chad behind me," Stewart says. "We stayed the same, then I pulled away and then I got caught up with lappers and he threw a 59 in and I came back and threw a 59 in. It was good racing."

Sitting only three points behind Reed heading into San Diego, Stewart grabs the holeshot at round

seven, besting holeshot artist Alessi to the first turn. Reed immediately moves by Alessi into second but can't match the pace of Stewart who runs away with the event.

"I mean, it was obvious from our times and the way I rode [that I was struggling]," Reed admits. "Every time out we kind of had something to work on and it was a really, really tough weekend. I love this place and I think second place was a really good ride for me tonight. There were a few pluses that you've got to go searching for but there were some pluses out of that ride."

So the two leave San Diego tied in points as they head back east for the Atlanta round of the series. "To come out of here tied with the points lead after [what happened at] A1, I don't think anyone would've believed that except for myself and our crew," says Stewart. "We went back and started working hard and I think it's been showing. I don't believe in momentum. I believe in working hard and making things happen."

With or without a belief in momentum, Stewart carries six straight wins into Atlanta and he gets the start yet again while Reed is stuck outside the top five. Stewart immediately begins pulling away from Yamaha's Broc Hepler who quickly finds Monster

Last year's East Coast Lites champ
Trey Canard is finding life difficult over
on the other side of the country

LITESWEST SWAPPIN' AND SWITCHIN'!

The Lites West concludes its run at Anaheim 3 and San Diego with Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Jake Weimer stepping up to win another race at A3 – his third of the year – while championship rival Ryan Dungey goes down in the first turn and fights his way back up to fourth. Dungey leaves A3 three points behind Weimer in the championship chase.

"I'm just trying to be smart and do the best that I can do," Weimer says. "That's it. That's all I can do. I just want to try and keep myself out of bad situations and be smart and that's really all you can ask from yourself, just to put your time in during the week and show up on the weekend knowing what you did during the week and do all you can. There isn't much you can do besides try your hardest, period. If you're fast, you win, if you're not, you don't."

In San Diego it's Weimer who's the fastest but Dungey gets away while Weimer sits near the tail end of the top 10. Dungey takes a seemingly easy win while Weimer catches up to third by the finish meaning he trails Dungey by two points with two rounds left to run.

"I really felt that tonight was the night that I needed to take control and I came here and did what I wanted to do and that was to win the race. It put me in the points lead so I'm pumped on that and the whole night," Dungey says. "I led it from start to finish."



Stewart takes a lucky
seven wins on the bounce

Energy Kawasaki's Ryan Villopoto and Reed breathing down his neck. Finally, on lap nine of 20, Hepler is passed by both of them and Reed sets out after Villopoto. Reed passes Villopoto for second only a couple of laps later but Stewart takes the points lead.

"The gameplan is to win the race and if you can't win be second," Reed says. "That's all I can do. From week to week I take it as a new race and this race was basically the first race of the season. Next week we'll go into it with a clean slate and be motivated. It's not a lack of confidence or a lack of anything, it's just me putting myself in good positions and riding to my full potential. Hopefully that puts us up front with James and we can have a good battle. That's what it's about. I'm sure he's getting as bored as s**t out front because I'm making it so easy on him."

Then comes Indianapolis and after battling Stewart (and losing) in their Heat race, Reed comes out and gets the holeshot in the Main Event before putting some time on Stewart as the San Manuel Yamaha rider works his way around Alessi for second.

After attempting to chase down Reed for the first couple of laps Stewart ends up washing out the front

end of his YZ450F on the third lap after a tricky double that is preceded by a small bump that the riders have to wheelie in order to do the double cleanly. Stewart gets up quickly and is fourth behind Alessi in third, Windham in second and Reed in the lead.

Stewart immediately passes Alessi for third and then sets out after Windham. Two laps later he attempts to pass Windham on the outside in the same turn in which he fell and Windham pushes him wide. However, Stewart completes the pass anyway at the end of the ensuing straightaway when he dives to the inside of Windham for the spot.

Over the next eight laps Stewart tries to trim Reed's lead but Reed holds steady. Lappers make a difference and just past the halfway point Reed gets through a set of three Honda lappers and Stewart makes up a ton of time when, in a kamikaze move, he passes all three riders in one turn when he swaps off of the track's dragon back and then slides under all three. Intentional or not, it works and, all of a sudden, Stewart is all over Reed for the lead.

On lap 14 Stewart gets a run on Reed on the track's longest straightaway which is a rhythm section on this

Mike LaRocco-designed track. Stewart pulls alongside Reed and then completes the pass in the next couple of turns and he immediately begins pulling away from Reed. The race seems over until Reed starts pulling the gap back in.

Leading into the switchback before the finishline on lap 16, Reed actually cases an on/off jump which causes him to nose-wheelie into the left-hand 180-degree turn. Without the ability to brake like he normally would have, Reed surprises Stewart by showing him a fender going into the left-hander and in the right-hander that immediately follows Stewart falls, handing the lead back to Reed who leads the remaining six laps on his way to his first win of the season.

"It feels awesome," Reed says. "I mean, it was a good win for many more reasons than you'd probably ever think. More than anything I got the holeshot and the crowd was going absolutely nuts. I kind of froze up, almost – I hadn't been out front all year long and hadn't led that many laps. It felt good. It felt like I got the monkey off my back a little bit."

With the win Reed pulls back to even with Stewart in the championship chase with eight rounds to run.

Davi Millsaps is running seventh in the Supercross standings...



...one place behind team-mate Ivan Tedesco



Brit Steven Clarke takes fifth in Indianapolis to move up to seventh in the East Coast Lites standings



Nico Izzì makes it three outta three podium finishes

LITESEAST POURCEL IN POLE

The Lites series switches to the East in Atlanta with Weimer's team-mates Austin Stroupe and Christophe Pourcel taking off in first and second. Stroupe begins to pull away before stalling his bike on the 10th lap, handing the lead – and the win – to Pourcel.

In Indianapolis, though, Pourcel gets the start before Stroupe comes by and pulls away, eventually winning by a little over a second after Pourcel begins catching him again late on.

"I should've had it last weekend but the first race [in Houston] was really kind of learning and stuff and getting back into the groove," Stroupe says. "It had been a while since I had raced so there were just nerves and stuff. I think I had it in the bag easy but I stalled it. This weekend I just rode smooth – I really didn't run my full pace but it's good to get a win and to try to cut the points lead down."

Stroupe trails leader Pourcel by 15 points with five rounds left to run while Nico Izzì – who has been on the podium at all three east rounds – sits between the two, 10 points behind Pourcel.

And not since '95-'96 when Jamie Dobb was kicking arse Stateside have the Brits had someone doing as well in SX as Steven Clarke. Finishing 13th first time out, the teenager improves to a top 10 finish at round two and in Indianapolis he grabs fifth in the Main Event to jump up to seventh in the standings.



Beauties and the beasts! Pourcel, Stroupe and Izzì share the podium with the Monster Energy honeyes



SERIESSTANDINGS SUPERCROSS

1	James Stewart	199 points
2	Chad Reed	199
3	Andrew Short	150
4	Josh Grant	138
5	Ryan Villopoto	138
6	Ivan Tedesco	132
7	Davi Millsaps	116
8	Mike Alessi	113
9	Kevin Windham	112
10	Timmy Ferry	98

LITES WEST

1	Ryan Dungey	135 points
2	Jake Weimer	133
3	Ryan Morais	124
4	Justin Brayton	103
5	Ryan Sjoes	85
6	Chris Blose	82
7	Dan Reardon	59
8	Trey Canard	54
9	Jeff Alessi	51
10	PJ Larsen	51
14	Adam Chatfield	34

LITES EAST

1	Christophe Pourcel	72 points
2	Nico Izzì	62
3	Austin Stroupe	57
4	Brandon Jesseman	43
5	Will Hahn	36
6	Martin Davalos	35
7	Steven Clarke	35
8	Blake Wharton	34
9	Matt Lemoine	29
10	Daniel Blair	26

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SEE AND TELL!

OUR INDUSTRY INSIDER STATESIDE TAKES US THROUGH HIS DAY – AND EVENING – AT THE RACES...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

I went to the Indianapolis SX and this is what I saw...

The streak stops here! The Australian wombat known as Chad Reed broke Stewie's streak and grabbed his first win of the season which means the points race is now tied and things are getting exciting! The Yamaha consecutive wins was also broken so their ad budgets will get a break this week and all hail the coming of the EFI bikes! Yeah that's it...

Reed grabbed the start and then, in an impressive display of cojones and skill, immediately doubled out of the first turn and tried to get away as fast as he could. We know that Stewart crashed twice but a win is a win and Reedy earned this one. What might have impressed me the most was when Stewie finally got by Reed on lap 14 he gapped The Chad a bit and with everything that has happened the last seven weeks it would've been totally expected to think the race was over. However, you knew something was up when the Suzuki regrouped and closed up that gap with a suddenness that wasn't expected. Stewie then hit his front brake lever on a (funnily enough) Yamaha Tuff Block and went down before the finish, handing Reed his first win of the series and us a battle to the end.

I thought that it was admirable the way Stewie handled the loss on the podium as he was quite happy that the fans got a race and that he tried his best. I expected him to be a little madder and a little more bitter at his loss but good for him. I texted him the next day and he said that he realises he's a role model and that he can't go up there and swear or anything like that. He said he rode his ass off and can't be upset at that. Actually, now that I think about it, Reed has handled his consecutive second places pretty well also which is a change from a few years ago when it seemed Chad was very angry at not winning.

Earlier in the day in practice Davi Millsaps had the nerve to set the fastest time and it seemed the Monster Energy leaderboard changing to 18 on top had the same effect as poking James with a skewer as he immediately laid down a lap that was

half-a-second faster than Davi. The weird thing was that for the longest time James' second best time had stood up but then as soon as it was not the fastest he must've sensed it and knocked a lap out just like that. Just something I noticed and was impressed with.

Mike Alessi got his first podium this season and I'm happy for the little guy. He got some luck as Andrew Short was all over him when he got a rock in his brake and Kevin Windham's bike broke but, hey, he earned it. I know Mike is having a tumultuous year off the track but he is proving that he never gives up and always tries his hardest every time he takes to the track. I almost ran down to the podium to give him a paper bag to breathe into as he couldn't seem to slow down and speak coherently or really take any breathers for that matter. It's awesome to see him so excited and seemingly thanking anyone that he ever spoke to.

Did you know that Mike is the seventh different rider to finish third this season? Good to see the podium's final spot is up for grabs so much and also did you know that Indianapolis is the first race that Mike's dad Tony has ever missed of Mike's? I can't help but feel that it's too bad a father missed his son's first ever SX podium but yet I can't help but feel the events might be related.

Austin Stroupe grabbed the win in the 250 class and with his domination last week it's really looking like the PC boys are rising to the top of the field on the east side (kind of like they are doing on the west side). Stroupe rode flawless and if he had won last week (which he should've) he'd be only one point back off the flying Frenchman. But as it stands now he's 15 points back and he's probably really wishing that he had electric start at Atlanta.

Christophe Pourcel was not feeling good all week and fighting some sort of sickness when he decided to just tough it out and get second this week according to team manager Mitch Payton. When he saw that on the last lap he was still close to Stroupe he knuckled down and blitzed the last lap which resulted in a 50.3 lap time! He closed to within a second of Stroupe and his last lap time was almost

a second better than Austin's best. In fact his lap time was third best in the entire night and it was achieved on the last lap when he was sick all week. Amazing!

On that note, it's funny how Pourcel was actually thinking strategy out there and how he dogs it at the test track when his team-mates are there. That's a total Euro move as JMB is famous for his exploits and I remember Joel Smets and Shayne King telling me how they attacked and then maintained at different times in the GPs. Here in America we have a strategy as well, it's called 'ride your balls off and go as fast as you can for as long as you can'.

It was a wild 450 Main as it seemed that every time you looked up there was a yellow flag flying somewhere. Short was all over Alessi in third when he somehow found the only rock in the sand and it wedged in his rear brake. Then Ferry tried to pull the same move on Byrne as he did in the heat and he high-sided. Wey went down hard late in the race and broke his helmet, got black eyes and broke some blood vessels in his eye. Josh Grant tipped over, Stewie went down twice and Hepler was either crashing a lot or practising for a pick-up-your-bike contest as he was down a bunch. I'm sure I'm missing some guys in there as well. Crazy night!

Kevin Windham had some terrible luck as he was all alone in third place when his transmission let go and he DNF'd. This goes along with his broken transmission in practice or a rock in the sprocket causing a broken transmission in practice. Whatever, there were two-bike related problems KW faced.

We got 16 laps out of Jason Lawrence this week and out of those there were some impressive ones. J-Law had the combined fifth fastest time and everyone – and I mean everyone – was looking forward to seeing his 450 debut. He is a small guy but rides with a ton of body English – I don't know if throwing around the bike are the right words but he sure did look good and stood out among the riders in his group. But as we all know, Lawrence was too sick to come out for the heat race and the drama goes on.

That's the way I saw it anyways...





Steady Steve Ramon lives up to his nickname with a 4-4 card for third on the day



MX1 race two – check out the advantage the two Martin Hondas already have





himx

Kevin Strijbos yanks a monster holey in the opening MX1 race as chaos is just about to break out behind him

DOUBLE ACT!

MARTIN HONDA GO 1-2 IN MX1 AND THERE'S MORE OF THE SAME FOR RED BULL KTM IN MX2 AS SOME OF THE WORLD'S BIGGEST HITTERS SLUG IT OUT AT HAWKSTONE PARK

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Suttly

Once upon a time there was a New Year's Day motocross at Hawkstone Park. It was always a very cold, usually very hungover affair and despite at one point being a pretty popular event its days were numbered. Then the Salop club had one of those moments of inspiration that typically result in people inventing hot things that cook, round things that make moving stuff easier and dough-based foodstuffs that come out of the packet in conveniently sized pieces...

By the back end of the '90s the once thriving continental pre-season international scene was on its uppers a little and spotting

a gap in the market the club decided to shift the date of their NYD event forward a couple of months, invite some of the world's top riders and call it something snappy like the Hawkstone International Motocross. That was in 1998 and since then they've not looked back with past and present world champs including Stefan Everts, Joel Smets, Sebastien Tortelli, Mickael Pichon and Jamie Dobb all using the Shropshire sand to test their fitness and bike set-up going into the GP season.

For 2009 there's only two past or present senior world champions in action – Teka Suzuki's '07 MX1 world champ Steve Ramon and reigning MX3 king Sven Breugelmans –

but the MX1 class still boasts 10 men who've topped GP podiums making for a hefty portion of world class talent. Okay, there may not be any GP winners among the MX2 entrants after Stephen Sword withdraws through illness but the Red Bull KTM factory team are there with Shaun Simpson and Rui Goncalves to give a 4000-strong paying gate the first UK glimpse this season of last year's all-conquering orange army.

And there's also a fresh new concept in UK MX – the British rider shoot-out – which pits 16 top homeboys against each other in a series of knock-out three-quarter lap races with a fat donkey-choker (£500 to be precise) going to the

>>

eventual top shooter-outer.

It's the MX2 boys who kick off the points-paying action and the home crowd are treated to the sight of Simpson holding the factory 250F WFO into the tunnel to claim the holeshot. And they're then treated to the sight of Simpson pulling clear as he nails the fastest lap of the race on his first full circuit and eventually clears off to win by over 22 seconds.

Goncalves is mired midpack on his opening lap but the Portuguese ace with the Carl Nunn replica beard pushes through to second at two-thirds distance which he holds to the flag. French GP rider Xavier Boog grabs third a further 14 seconds back just ahead of Moto-One KTM's Shane Carless who has a storming ride for fourth and Red Bull KTM Junior team rider Joel Roelants.

Race two is closer but ends with the same top three riders in the same top three positions. Simpson enjoys another lightning start but this

time Goncalves gets a better drop and is able to limit the damage to less than seven seconds by the time the chequers come out. In fourth this time out is DB Racing Honda's Neville Bradshaw followed by MVR-D Suzuki's world junior champ Matiss Karro.

The in-depth talent is certainly in the MX1 division and this translates into more exciting racing in their opening moto as the four-fiddy thumpers lock horns from the drop of the gate, lock bars halfway up the start straight and then lock bikes and bodies in the mother of all pile-ups entering the trees.

As the dust clears among the fallen riders are Breugelmans, James Noble, Bryan MacKenzie and Gordon Crookard. Noble gets going again and Breugelmans limps back down the start straight but Bry and Gordy are down for a worryingly long time as they're attended by medics. Bry ends up with broken bones in his hand but it's far worse for Gordy who sustains

what could possibly be season-ending injuries which require a blood transfusion and an operation to remove his spleen.

For Breugelmans, who's racing Hawkstone to suss out the track in preparation for the opening round of the MX3 world championship on April 12, it's also the end of his day's racing. It's a long journey from Belgium with nothing to show for it but a 45-minute qualifying session, 100 metres of the start straight and a whole bunch of bruises.

As the pile-up happens just before the point where the start straight joins the full track no red flag comes out and it's Kevin Strijbos who leads Martin Honda team-mate De Reuver, Relentless Suzuki's Lewis Gregory, Brad Anderson aboard the PAR Homes Honda and Billy MacKenzie. Teka Suzuki's Ken De Dycker's also running top 10 along with his team-mate Ramon and CCM's Tom Church.

Billy Mac quickly moves through to third >>

QUOTEUNQUOTE

CARL NUNN >>>

"First few laps [of the second moto] were a bit slow and I lost a lot of places but once I found my rhythm it was good and I started reeling people in and passing them straight away. And I was getting the whoops perfect and I don't think a lot of people were getting through them so that was probably making me up a serious amount of time and saving me a lot of energy.

"I'm loving the 450, it's great. The first few races are always difficult with nerves and stuff but I've had good races so far and I'm happy with how it's going. My pace is pretty good and I'm looking forward to it all."



himx

*Roger Warren takes
Shaun Simpson through
a post event debrief*





Daniel Arnold leaps out of the bombhole



QUOTE UNQUOTE

TOM CHURCH >>

"It's been a good day. First race I got a good start and just got away with the guys – should have rode a bit better, I rode a bit tight but it was okay generally. In the second I had a terrible start, came through pretty good, hit a bit of a block in the middle and then got going again at the end."

but is then displaced by De Dycker as the Belgian and Dutch contingent show their mastery of the sand. On lap nine the reigning British champ reclaims third when De Dycker pulls out with a sick engine, a lap later De Reuver gets past Strijbos and the top three finishing order is set. Ramon ends the race fourth ahead of Cedric Melotte and Erik Eggens with TC next best Brit home in seventh.

Strijbos, De Dycker and De Reuver do the business out of the gate in race two as Billy Mac

goes a titter on the opening lap and pulls out. With a much better start this time around De Dycker's perfectly poised to snatch the lead from Strijbos on lap two. With a new motor to show from some swift spannering De Dycker steadily edges away to win by over eight seconds from Strijbos and a distant De Reuver with Ramon getting his teeth into another fourth-placed finish ahead of MVR-D Suzuki's Carl Nunn who shows the move up to the MX1 division is suiting the man with the Rui Goncalves replica beard.

In between the two international blocks of racing the British rider shoot-out takes place. On paper the idea is a sound one but while the knock-out format may work well in the tight confines of a SX track, on the Hawkstone circuit not even Roger Warren's super-enthusiastic commentary can inject any real excitement to it. In the end it's won by Simpson but for next year the organisers need to look for something a little more thrilling – a spot of cheese rolling down the famous hill would do it for me...

MVR-D Suzuki's Matiss Karro is in impressive form for sixth overall in MX2

REDBULLKTM

MX2 1-2 >>

At the close of play we grabbed five minutes with Shaun Simpson, Rui Goncalves and team boss Stefan Everts in the Red Bull KTM awning to get their views on the Hawkstone races and how the season's looking early doors.

After a trio of pre-season internationals Shaun, the new boy on the KTM factory team, is shaping up well. "It's been a good start to the season so far," says Shaun. "That's three internationals we've done now and I feel I'm progressing more and more every time. The first one in Mantova went good – it was a little bit sandy and I like it when it's like that. Last week I had a couple of stupid mistakes which cost me the overall but I got it again today so, yeah, I'm happy the way the season's started out.

"The team's working really well and the bike's awesome. Everything's just that little bit better on the factory bike – the suspension, the engine, the brakes. It's just nice to be part of the factory team. I can't wait for the first GPs to come around."

The international marks the return to Hawkstone for Shaun after his British title clinching performance last September when he twice followed Stephen Sword home. Okay, so Sword's absent this time around but the young Scot doesn't put a wheel wrong all day.

"Today my speed's been good. Rui was pushing hard in the second one which was good because in the first one I had no-one pushing me so it felt quite easy. It's always good to push yourself, especially when it's as rough as it was in the second one.

"The winter's been really good. I've been training with Stefan and my new trainer Hugo Amerika so we've had a good programme and I've been enjoying it. We've been training in a small group with Max Nagl as well. Training together is good – you can train off each other and have a bit of a laugh at the same time instead of it being a grind.

"The internationals are quite important – they're good to judge your speed and for you confidence. This is the second one I've won and last week I was second which is a bit of a pity or I would've had a clean sweep."

The international is Goncalves' debut at the famous Shropshire circuit but you wouldn't believe it to see the Portuguese rider tear through the pack in the opening race and stick with Shaun for much of race two.

"It's been really good," grins Rui. "It's my first time at Hawkstone and it was a good practice. In the first race I struggled with the start but I came through the middle of the pack up to second. Second race I was just following Shaun until I made a mistake and jumped into another guy and had to fight my way back. But it was a pretty good weekend, I'm happy and I'm getting ready for GPs."

Red Bull KTM team boss Stefan Everts is playing the mother hen role at Hawkstone to his two young stars and he's clearly happy at what he's seen.

"Shaun is in good shape and is riding well. Today he didn't make any mistakes – he made a few mistakes in Valance and Mantova – and he's improving every week. He's got a really good base, his riding is good and he has a lot of confidence. I think he's really ready to go and race for the world title.

"A lot of things changed for Rui this winter – he's starting to put the puzzle together which he couldn't do last year and you can see that his attitude on the bike is different. He also really likes the new bike and I think he can also be a strong competitor for the title so hopefully we can have the same scenario as last year with Tyla and Tommy and try to keep the fight in-house with KTM."

Simpson's in devastating form to go 1-1

RESULTS

MX1 >>

1	Marc De Reuver (Martin Honda)	25+20=45
2	Kevin Stribos (Martin Honda)	22+22=44
3	Steve Ramon (Teku Suzuki)	18+18=36
4	Cedric Melotte (CAS Honda)	16+15=31
5	Erik Eggens (Beursfoen Suzuki)	15+14=29
6	Tom Church (CCM Racing Team)	14+12=26
7	Ken De Dycker (Teku Suzuki)	0+25=25
8	Jason Dougan (CCM Racing Team)	12+13=25
9	Mark Jones (Samsung Yamaha)	13+10=23
10	Carl Nunn (MVR-D Suzuki)	5+16=21

MX2 >>

1	Shaun Simpson (Red Bull KTM)	25+25=50
2	Rui Goncalves (Red Bull KTM)	22+22=44
3	Xavier Boog (Inotec Suzuki)	20+20=40
4	Joel Roelants (Red Bull KTM Junior)	16+15=31
5	Neville Bradshaw (DB Racing Honda)	12+18=30
6	Matiss Karro (MVR-D Suzuki)	13+16=29
7	Scott Elderfield (PAR Honda)	7+14=21
8	Rasmus Jorgensen (Relentless Suzuki)	8+12=20
9	Pascal Leuret (MAR Honda)	9+11=20
10	Lars Oldekamp (Silent Sport KTM)	11+8=19

QUOTEUNQUOTE

BILLY MACKENZIE >>

"I haven't rode a lot since I came back from California and the first day I did ride I sort of gave myself a little nick in my arm and it's taken a while to get rid of so I haven't really rode. This is like the first moto I've done since California. I came in not expecting too much, I just wanted to have fun and get some time on the bike.

"First race I got out of the gate not great - I was in about eighth - and just made my way through. I didn't have a gameplan, I just kept pushing and pushing and halfway through the moto I got arm-pump. Normally I'd have dropped back or tried to protect lines or settle for a position but I just kept pushing because that's how my training's been this year and eventually got through it and towards the end started to go faster and ended up third.

"I got a great start in the second just behind Stribos but it was really dark out there - all the shadows had begun to come over - and me and De Dycker were fighting it out. Before the lap had finished I just came in hot into one of the corners, couldn't really see the bumps and I lost the front end and just face-planted the berm and it tucked my head right down so my head hit my chest. I was seeing stars.

"The whole day I've been taking painkillers for my arm - it's called tendonitis or something, it just crunches when I move it - and the only thing for that is rest. I tried getting back into the race but because I wasn't in the action I was thinking about my arm too much and it was hurting me. But I know my speed's good and the fitness is there so I'll just take the positives from the weekend."

MARTINHONDA

MX1 1-2 >>>

It's all smiles in the Martin Honda camp after Marc De Reuver and Kevin Stribos go 1-2 in the MX1 division. De Reuver's 1-3 racecard is good enough to top the podium and, unsurprisingly, the Dutchman's right at home in the sand.

"The track was good. There were a lot of ruts in the jumps but I took two good starts which I'm happy with because my starts are a little bit sh*t all the time. The first heat I had a win and the second I was third - I was a little bit slower than Ken and Kevin in the end but it was good."

Stribos, coming back after a '08 season ruined through injury, looks impressive all day and is pleased with his performance.

"It was a good track and my starts were good but in the second race I had some problems with the sun you know, it was very dangerous in the ruts. But I felt okay. In the first race I got arm-pump so Marc passed me and in the second race Ken was a little bit quicker but I'm happy with second place overall and it's giving me a good feeling.

"It's the first time I've been here when it's dry so it's been really good fun to ride. The scary part is the whoops at the back - that's pretty scary but that's fun for the crowd."



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DIRTDIVA!

ELLIE CAINES – THE 13-YEAR-OLD
FEMALE FLIER ON AN MX MISSION

PREDICTARIOT!

ELITE YOUTH CUP, BYMX, MXY2, BSMA – RAGE'S TIPS FOR THE TOP IN 2009

LUKE HAWKINS



Damon Wales is one to watch this season



SW star Liam Knight



MX2 and BYMX Open class ace Connor Walkley



BYMX and MX2 contender Josh Spinks



Big things are expected of both Conrad Mewse and David Keet this year



Scott James is a fancied runner in both the BYMX Open class and MX2 divisions

PREDICTARIOT!

YOUTH TITLE ROCKETS ARE READY TO LAUNCH...

Predictions, predictions! All the right names in all the appropriate frames but not necessarily in the right order. Yep, it's that time of year again when all the MX pundits disappear into a dark corner, wrap a fringed tea towel around their heads and pretend to be Mystic Meg!

With this season's youth motocross rocket now fully primed and ready to fire it's almost time to light the blue touch paper then sit back and watch the fireworks. But first a few thoughts on just who might be popping a champagne cork or cracking open a fizzy lemonade bottle while posing for the cameras in six months time.

The big three Junior 65cc shindigs – namely the BYMX, Elite and BSMA series – will almost certainly be of a similar quality and degree of difficulty when it comes to nailing down the top prize with a few of the fancied runners smartly covering their bets by entering all three competitions. With a whole host of new kids on the block flooding in to compete in the smaller than usual fields this year there could however be a surprise upstart grabbing the headlines or springing a shock or two here and there. We will be keeping an eye on that one early doors.

Having said all of that though there is one clear stand-out name. Conrad Mewse finished last term like a little Katoom express, displaying exceptional form good enough to give the '08 hotshots a torrid time. You can fully expect him

to kick on from that and be reeling in one or two of the majors this year. SX champion Sid Evans, David Keet, Jake Deacon and Aaron Piper together with Jamie Carpenter should also be there or thereabouts when it comes to completing the various podium line-ups and providing the main championship challenges.

Elsewhere in the 65cc division, Brett Pocock is the latest member of that particular mega racing family to enter the fray aboard the MGP Kawasaki. Along with the other colourful Cobra runners, Brett will be a real easy spot in a massive sea of KTM orange but don't be too surprised if by the end of the season he is fully up to speed and sizing up a podium step.

The 85cc divisions are once again fit to bursting with a mass of riders entering in all four different codes. The Small Wheel sections have a depth of talent that will provide a series of belting races with Callan Cooper, Corie Southwood, Tom Neal, Brad Todd, Matthew Callaghan, Oliver Osmaston, Liam Knight and Connor Clarke all well capable of winning a moto. However, with Ben Watson coupled up to Pro Circuit 150F Honda that will surely prove to be an unbeatable winning combination. The only real question at the end of the day could well be just how many times will Ben be beaten to the chequered flag this season? Not too many would be my guess and just maybe none at all as Ben represents the finest talent currently

circulating in youth motocross.

The KWS series will be showcasing a full field of Mini Masters at 85cc level all running together but with Matthew Fleming and young Manxman Callum Cooper in the list they both start as real fur-lined favourites to be claiming their respective Big and Small Wheel silverware come the end of the season. With all due respect to the KWS series, the Big Wheel championships at ACU and MCF level will be a lot harder to come by. Looking down the list of runners for the BYMX series, Matthew and Danger UK's 'Rip n Roll' Ryan Houghton start as obvious odds-on favourites. Behind that pairing however a roar of four-banger Hondas in the hands of Jamie McCanney, Luke Norris (when fit) and Aaron Pipon could prove to be more than difficult to overcome along with Jordan Godwin, James Dunn, Michael Eccles and Ben Howell being quality upgrades from last year's Small Wheel series. Finally, KTM pilot Adam Sterry – who has been in cracking early season form – could well prove to be a real cat among the fancied pigeons.

In the other two codes I fully expect Dan Thornhill together with Jordan Wills (both BSMA) and Robbie Muscat in the Elite events to also be grabbing their fair share of the glory and headlines.

As the reigning BSMA Big Wheel supremo, 14-year-old Luke Dean will be riding a 125cc



BSMA contender
Jordan Willis leads
Ben Howell



Aza Pipon lets it
all hang out – he's
wild and fast

MAX!

TRAINING, TRACK WALKS AND A NICE NAP AFTER LUNCH AT HOOTERS – OUR BRIT ABROAD IS LOVING LIFE OUT IN SOCAL

Words by Max Anstie

Hey everyone! So I'm back and it's a new year in America! We have a bunch of kids all living at our Anstie Training Facility in Southern California and loving life. Basically, after riding and training we jump on the pit bikes and do a 40-minute moto complete with loop outs and take out wars with little Alfie Bowtell!

Unfortunately for me I have no rear fender from earlier today. We have no foam pit and we can't do any tricks but I decided to pull a back flip! And as you might have guessed it didn't end up too well. Also, track builder Jordan went and bought an Xbox so they have all been playing some shooting game – I don't get it and I'm really rubbish at it!

I am now with Von Zipper goggles but what also comes with them is Skull Candy and Billabong so as soon as I got my sweet speakers from Skull Candy we were raving all the time! Techno style ha ha ha.

We've been VIPs to all the supercrosses around here and at Anaheim 3 they asked me to get up and do an interview on the loud speaker to everyone in the stadium. I was really scared! Normally I don't ever get nervous before an interview but firstly I was sat next to a load of celebrities and secondly the guy goes 'so we're up here in the VIP area with all the celebrities and here's a kid you gotta watch out for next year'... So afterwards I went around telling everyone I was going back to my crib and MTV were coming around to shoot some videos ha ha ha! It was really cool and my team manager Revvin' Devin says I already sound like a pro!

I enjoyed doing all the track walks and learning a lot more about what it takes to win supercross races. This was valuable time for my trainer (dad) and I to really get to know how the races are run in America. I can't wait for 2010 – the Euro invasion is coming and it's going to be a blast!

The R&R KTM team and I did a Gold Cup race at Glen Helen the other weekend. One of my biggest competitors was there – Eli Tomac. We went out for the first moto and battled it out. He took the holeshot but I had a little fun in the next section, ramming him off the track. We still had two other classes and five more motos to go. The next moto I beat him out of gate and took the win. Our third moto I got last place gate pick and got pushed off the track in the first corner – I made it back up to the top 10 but it was tough trying to get around to catch Tomac who won that moto. Going into the second motos I felt better than ever and took the next win. The next moto, which was only one moto apart from the last, Eli must have been tired because he never showed up to the line. I think he was trying to conserve his energy for the last moto of the day when, unfortunately for him, I pinned it to the chequers and I think he got sixth or seventh in that one. It was a really fun day and all the R&R KTM riders did awesome as well.

The Monday after Glen Helen we were back on track – up at 5.30 for schoolwork and then training our butts off. The whole team has so much fun working together and we're all just trying to stay focused and get ready for the Texas Nationals coming up. We had a few Dutch guys come in for the Anstie Motocross Adventure this week. It's a week-long fun Moto Adventure where you ride KTMs, go to all the best moto tracks in Southern California and even do a race at the end of the week if you want. Those guys choose to go to San Diego SX. They got pit passes and tickets from KTM and had a fun time – I know that because they are already planning a trip back. If you want to know more about it go to anstieracing.com

On Valentine's Day I didn't get a card but I did have a job to do. The night before I spent with our KTM Racing Director (and fellow Brit) Kurt Nicoll and he took me to supercross the next morning. It was time to go to work and check out this track. After doing the track walk and feelin' out the pits I headed off to the beach with my dad and Devin. We had lunch at the world famous Hooters and then I decided it was nap time. My dad woke me up around 6pm and we headed from our hotel back to the track for the race. The whole R&R KTM Team had a good time there and I liked watching my KTM colleagues tear it up around San Diego.

Then it was back to the Anstie Training Facility and back to the basics of training. The whole team is getting prepped for our next Gold Cup race this weekend at Competitive Edge (high desert). We're off to the races – I'll update you next month!

Globus Maximus

Max

Yamaha stroker in the BSMA Seniors title chase. Can Luke repeat Connor's feat of '08 and successfully beat off the four-banger opposition to claim the crown? Yes he can – especially if the pre-season body language is anything to go by – but expect a full-on challenge from David Sweet, Matthew Bayliss on the CCM and a host of others in a tight section

Onwards and upwards and the top sections of this year's youth divisions are a virtual stick a pin in it and hope for the best job with so many evenly matched title contenders to choose from, all toughing it out in differing series. Right at the very top of the tree when it comes to age in the ACU ranks, 18-year-old Josh Waterman will be in his last season of youth exploits on a new KTM doing his stuff under the Rip n Roll Danger UK banner.

If there is a favourite, ACU Academy member Josh fits the bill nicely for BYMX and MX2. But then again so does super-smooth Redline KTM runner Josh Spinks and Moto One's James Hutchinson. All three guys along with Team Green's Scott James have more than enough talent and speed to run off with any of

the major ACU youth prizes.

Behind those four top guns the battle for the 15-year-old end-of-season bragging rights between Connor Walkley, Brad Pocock and Luke Hawkins could very well result in either one of these three mega talents being elevated to the headiest of heights. In the ultimate chase for glory the extra pro backing that Team Pocock with U-Tag Yamaha on board and Team Hawkins coupled up to PAR Honda could well make the difference in a tough season where machine perfection could be a crucial deciding factor.

Sticking the pin in again, Jack Rowland, Dan McCanney, Ewan McClaren, Ryan King, Jamie Houghton, Kelvin Townsend and Sean McDonald all have real chances too of being a major influence in the chase for BYMX points.

Looking further afield to other competitions, watch out for Turbo Taylor and Lewis Trickett in MCF action and in the KWS Masters version of MX2 Matt Burrows on the Relentless Suzuki along with Damon Wales look like a good each way bet

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DIRT DIVA!

ELLIE GIVES IT WELLY...

It's often the way that circumstance and chance – maybe even fate – take a decisive guiding hand when it comes to determining someone's destiny and possibly shaping their future to some degree. So when in 2005 Martin Caines purchased a 50cc bike for his son Charley he could have hardly imagined that four years later his daughter Ellie would be the one hitting the headlines and tearing up the dirt. But that's the way it panned out...

Back in 2005 the now 13-year-old Ellie from Wychbold near Droitwich in Worcestershire had no real vision of being a motocross dirt diva. But when brother Charley decided he would rather play footy than give motocross a spin Ellie was more than keen to try out the little rev box on the small trainer track at Wilden Lane. There began instantly a partnership and a passion that has kicked on year on year to a position right now where Miss Caines has her eyes firmly fixed on a top three podium finish in the girls' national over the next two seasons.

Ellie recently upgraded to riding a Big Wheel 85cc Katoom and she knows all too well this year will be a real toughie trying to improve on last season's fifth-placed finish in the Small Wheels section at the girls' national event. Ellie missed out on fourth by the smallest of margins but nevertheless it was some consolation when she claimed the holeshot prize with three out of

four first corners nailed to perfection.

Over the winter months Ellie has been in weekly action at Cotswold and Wilden events, polishing her skills and not her nails in this toughest of cold winters. With a few more electrifying holeshots tucked away Ellie has further enhanced her reputation of being the queen of the first turn. You could try asking national runners Dan Thornhill or Ben Howell just how quick and skilful she has been recently at flying out of the traps and then showing the rest of the pack – Dan and Ben included – the racing line in and out of turn one.

The plan for the spring term in the lead-up to the girls' nationals is to once again compete in Cotswold club events where last year Ellie scooped up the most improved rider trophy. Another addition to the armoury for this year will be extra tuition under the guidance of South African Maxxis contender Lloyd Vercueil at the Wildmoor facility near Bromsgrove.

As in previous years it will be a full-on, all-hands-to-the-pumps family effort with mum, dad and older brother Ben providing all the necessary back-up and support but if there are any sponsors out there looking for a really talented teenage dirt diva to fly the flag and advertise their wares they can get in touch with Team Caines via email at cainesjotin@tiscali.co.uk



Welsh wizard
Greg Evans



FORESHORE, FORSURE!

WELSH YOUTH ACADEMY GETS GREEN LIGHT

Everyone it seems knows about the high-profile ACU Youth MX Academy with talented individuals including the likes of Josh Waterman, Ben Watson and Brad Pocock hitting the headlines most weeks. Well, whatever the ACU can do the Welsh can do too – that's the plan anyhow if former schoolie ace Mark Thomas has anything to do with it.

Mark, as volunteer co-ordinator, has recently launched an initiative backed by the ACU and Cardiff City Council to set up a Welsh Youth MX Academy. The set-up will have a double mandate of not only getting a youth training academy off the ground but also of running a retraining and education programme for illegal off-road riders who have been referred to them by the local authorities.

The whole venture is taking place at the Cardiff City CMX centre. Pro help and support for academy training and individual tuition has already been secured from a host of notable Welsh stars including Mark Jones, David Gillet, Glen Phillips, Jamie Lewis and Ashley Greedy. In setting up the project Mark has registered a new club with the ACU and the academy operation will be run under the Foreshore MXC

banner. Hopefully as the season progresses Mark will be rolling out a club racing programme too with the possibility of mid-week team races and head-to-head shoot-outs taking place.

One young guy more than keen to ink a deal and sign up to the new exciting initiative is little Welsh wizard Greg Evans. Greg and the Evans family have been real pillars of support in BSMA national events both on and off the track over the last three seasons. This year will be just the same with Greg having real high hopes of nailing down a top six finish in the Small Wheel 85cc competition.

Greg's MX career got off to a flying start at Auto level, winning a succession of trophies including national SX rounds in the '04/'05 season. Since then Greg has been plagued by niggling setbacks but hopefully with the help of Foreshore and the glittering array of talent on offer to learn from Greg will be hitting the podium steps once again this season.

For more information on Foreshore MXC or the CMX centre fire off an email to markthomasfmx@hotmail.com or check out www.cmxcentre.co.uk

DOWNTIME!

TENDONITIS AND THE CRAPPY BRITISH WEATHER HAS KEPT BILLY OFF A BIKE FOR MOST OF THE MONTH BUT HE'S STILL FITTED IN A COUPLE OF DAYS IN ITALY AND HAD HIS CAR WRITTEN OFF...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photos by Suttty

Well this is gonna be a motocross-only column by the looks of it as I can't think of anything I've been doing that's exciting apart from riding at Hawkstone! It's been a bit of a nightmare since I got back from California really though, well as far as riding is concerned. The day I got back Britain was covered in snow and it stayed that way for what felt like a good three weeks or something – however long it was, the tracks weren't rideable so it was just down to pushing it in the gym.

We still had testing to do though so we organised with Honda to have a couple days testing in Mantova after the international there. I flew to Italy midweek and got a couple of days riding done with the Japanese from Honda. It was a good little trip and we got loads done with the factory bike and I felt much better in my head knowing we had a good set-up as before in California all I had ridden was the stock bike with a few parts.

Just towards the end of testing on a freezing Friday morning in Italy I was out doing a few laps trying to warm up before I started putting the times in against the clock when just randomly I

corrected the bike on some small bumps coming into a corner and felt a little twinge in my forearm. I didn't think much of it – I just thought I'd tweaked a muscle – but when we left and the next week rolled on the pain got worse and my arm started to swell up and lock out. It also had this really weird grinding feeling and sound deep inside the tissue. I kept going with it thinking it would clear up but eventually I looked into it a little and it turns out I have tendonitis. I've been for a scan this morning and go for an injection tomorrow to get it fixed but it's been like that for about a month so riding has been pretty much non-existent for me recently!

I've ridden two days in Mantova testing, one day at Armthorpe with Dougan, one day at Finningley testing with the team and Hawkstone. That's been it since I got back from the States! So coming away from Hawkstone with a third in the first race and knowing my speed is there I'm pretty happy with myself, as were the team. Yeah, I threw her away in the second race and seeing as it was the first lap and I was at the back I thought there was no point in using my arm more than I needed to and just gave it a rest

for the day but me and the team had even contemplated not riding Hawkstone at all so I'll take all the positives from the weekend. Especially the first race – I enjoyed myself out there. There was a point mid-race when I pumped up and was struggling but I just gritted my teeth and pushed on, rode through it a little and gained my speed back for the second part of the race when normally I would have that mental block with arm-pump and accepted the place I was in instead of crashing. But this time I actually enjoyed the burning feeling – reminded me of the gym!

Another thing I liked were the sprints – they were cool but also wild too! Me and Ando were going at it in a couple of them! I was feeling really confident about winning that 500 quid – when me and Ando talked about it before it started we did touch on the idea of going halves just in case one of us crashed out in the first semi! But I know Brad's a gambler and he always beats me at poker so I thought I'd go all-in on this one seeing as I had the better first race! I thought about Shaun but I knew I'd be able to do him up the start straight and I thought





if I got in front then I should be good til the end!

It was all going to plan at first and I had pound notes in my eyes as I did Ando on the first corner and pulled a small gap on Shaun. Then we came to the whoops and they were pretty much the deciding factor of the whole tournament! If you got through them then you had pretty much won! You had to double the last two though and it was proper sketchy. I went single-double-double but as I landed I gassed it down the landing and got bogged down in the soft stuff in the middle. The engine bogged and endo'd into the last one and went down. I knew that was it over so I didn't rush getting up. It was good fun though – can't wait to do it again! You pull off some crazy moves on a sprint lap. I think there could be a new sport invented there!

So, yeah, Hawkstone was cool and it was good to get back on the bike again. Today my arm is feeling loads better and with the injection tomorrow it'll be sweet for the weekend and I'll be able to start riding again next week and get my motos in.

Remember me telling you about my car race? Well just recently I was invited to another 'Donno

Derby' – only this time it sounded a bit crazier as it was being held in the car park with a bit of off-roading and sliding about. I got myself all excited about it again but on the day after being in the gym I was just on a mind blank – y'know, sat in front of the TV, sleeping, dossing about online. Then I was sent through a picture on my phone of my car WRITTEN OFF! I'd forgot all about the race and had left my keys in the car up there so, naturally, they'd just taken it out and ruined the thing! They all found it so amusing! I was actually gutted I didn't write it off myself to be honest but I saw the funny side – I would've done the same thing! It was only 200 quid but I need to go in search of another car now so next time I can spank them all! From looking at the photos they had a right laugh – fireworks all taped onto the roof and stuff like Nitro Circus!

My brother came down for the week before Hawkstone too – he had a holiday from work and decided he'd come spend it with his big bro! I thought it was a bit weird at first – surely he can't miss me that much? I've bullied him pretty much his whole life, forever getting each other in trouble with Big Bill so I thought he would be

glad to get rid of me! But he was bell keen for coming down so I was like 'that's cool'. I did warn him though that I don't do anything exciting right now – just training, sleeping and eating – but still he came down.

So the first day he stayed I took him for a beating in the morning! Maybe we're too old to bully each other now but that doesn't mean I don't have other ways of making him feel pain! No lie-in for Stevie Mac on holiday – it was up at 7.30 and in the gym for 8.15 for Kirk to put him through his paces! We had a crazy big cardio session with everyone involved and we had to mark down every distance we made over a certain amount of time. So basically it was how hard you pushed yourself but still being looked over by Kirk and competing against everyone else. Stevie is pretty competitive by nature so didn't hold back much and paid for it for the next three days! Mwahahahaha!

He did leave with a bag full of Fox stuff though so maybe he didn't miss me at all – maybe he just needed supplies for the year! Ah well, it was fun having him down (did I say that out loud?)...





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